

# **THE SHADOW OF THE ASTRAL**

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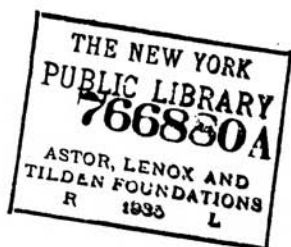
**A MYSTIC NARRATIVE**

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**BY  
LOUIS PLANTE**

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## FOREWORD

Here is a book that may be regarded as an extended Commentary and an Object Lesson on that wonderful New Testament text: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

It is quite true that it contains the usual Romance, Tragedy and strong emotional appeals that characterize the ordinary novel; yet the great central teaching of the book is the emergence of a human soul from "The Shadow of the Astral" into the higher consciousness of Life and Reality.

The Theme is, therefore, the greatest that can engage the attention of human thought—the Pathway through which the soul climbs from the low grounds of material ideas and ideals upward to the conscious recognition of those Great Spiritual Realities of life which are altogether unknown to the masses of earth's denizens.

While the numerous characters in the story all stand out distinct and clear in their personalities, those of Herminio, the Anchorite, and Anthony, the Truth Seeker, are sketched with masterly hand, and hold the center of the stage throughout the narrative and focalize the interest of the reader.

Lovers of the Metaphysical and the Occult will find herein a wealth of phenomenal experiences and very clear and rational interpretation thereof that will make the volume one of deep interest and value to them.

Here will be found full recognition of the wondrous and far-reaching power of thought; the close relationship in consciousness between minds incarnate and minds discarnate; the great fact of Spiritual Guardianship and Guidance most effectively set forth; and many of the occult laws that govern the soul's evolutionary progress stated and expounded.

It may, indeed, be truthfully asserted that every reader of this book who is a genuine seeker after truth, will sit with great delight beside Anthony at the feet of Herminio and drink in gratefully the rich lessons of spiritual instruction from his inspired lips.

All who have uttered Goethe's prayer "Light! more Light," or followed the "Gleam" of Tennyson, a light never yet seen on land or sea, or prayed with Newman, "Lead, Kindly Light," will read with most intense interest of the many lights that manifested in the lives of Herminio and of Anthony and the masterly, yet natural explanations given in the narrative.

To many, doubtless, the most interesting and captivating of all the Chapters will be the description of the midnight entertainment of "The Astral Players" who entertain Anthony in the forest under the silvery moonlight where speech, music, poetry, song, merriment and instruction are delightfully mingled and afterwards expounded to him—that is to say, to every reader of the book. It will be difficult, we venture to say, to find in modern fiction any feature more unique and beautiful than this midnight Entertainment of the Astral Players.

The poetic sections of the book are numerous, in some cases extensive, with many gleams of poetic beauty, in not a few instances rising to a high level of thought and beauty of expression.

The book, we believe, will be recognized as a divine Allegory and take its place with Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

The reader found its pages interesting and instructive throughout and it is certainly a pleasure to commend it as a book with a mission to humanity.

B. F. AUSTIN.

May 25th, 1921  
Los Angeles, Calif.



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# The Shadow of the Astral.

## CHAPTER I.

### Herminio the Seer.

I linger yet with Nature, for the night  
Hath been to me a more familiar face  
Than that of man; and in her starry shade  
Of dim and solitary loveliness,  
I learn'd the language of another world.

—Manfred.

During the closing years of the nineteenth Century, there lived in one of the cantons of Switzerland an old man of peculiar habits, and character of thought. His abode, a small hut, was situated in a solitude of the Alps, well secluded from intrusion, the nearest village being distant about three miles. Here Herminio, for that was the old man's name, lived alone, amid the solitudes of nature. His dwelling was the work of his own hands; being built partly of stone and partly of timber it presented a curious contrast, while the roof was held in place by heavy stones and boulders. At the rear of the hermitage, for such we will now call it, there was a small inclosure, into which Herminio drove his few sheep and goats every evening shortly after sundown. His evening meal consisting solely of nuts, fruit and milk was taken at twilight, after which he spent some time in meditation and retired.

According to the story of the villagers Herminio had lived in the neighborhood forty-five years. Sometimes, however, these statements were contradicted,

it being claimed by others that he had always been known as an old man. Be that as it may, the fact remained that the oldest inhabitants of the region had always remembered even their elders speak of him as the venerable recluse, with the snow-white hair and beard. These statements when deeply considered, never failed to throw an air of mystery around the old sage of the mountains. How long he had actually lived in the solitudes so near to them, was not, after all, so important a question. What they would have known was, what were his underlying motives and the chief mainspring of his life and actions. This secret, however much they strove to discover, always eluded them. But what of that? Was it not enough to know he was their greatest friend? Was he not always near them in perplexity, sorrow and death? Were not his words a sweet musical cadence comforting them in affliction? Did they not hear from his own lips the Divine truth: "My children, thank God for your afflictions, for it is only through affliction and sorrow that your hearts can be softened." What man among them could give utterance to such truth and put it forth in so beautiful a form? Surely here was a being above the type of ordinary man. Not only did he comfort them by personal visits in their hours of adversity, for when that was not possible a letter would reach them which had been written by his own hand. How many a mother had been comforted by such messages on the death of her beloved child! How many a father had seen and read the words of comfort when some wayward son had unexpectedly left the home—perhaps never to return.

These incidents, as before stated, not only cast an air of mystery around the character of Herminio, but in addition this was accompanied by an attitude



towards him of the most profound respect. Of his inner life and practices his friends knew nothing. It was only the outer manifestations of which they had any knowledge. He did not receive any visitors in his mountain home. Here he remained shielded by nature from the lower vibrations, which in the blessed moments of silence he did not wish to receive. Not because of any pride in his heart did he in such a way seclude himself from his friends, for pride was an emotion entirely foreign to his nature, but to co-operate with certain occult laws which controlled and governed his own individual development, it was necessary that he should remain for some hours each day, wrapped in abstract thought. From his reveries he came forth rested and rejuvenated, inspired and uplifted, full of faith and superhuman courage, to help his younger brothers in the Way of Life.

From the description given of the character of Herminio, it seems almost needless to state, that he lived in poverty. His small herd of goats which gambled over the mountain during the day, and which he drove home so carefully at nightfall, afforded him with almost half his daily sustenance. Many times during the earlier years of his ministrations among the villagers, he had been offered money which he declined to accept, saying that his motives did not spring from the desire of reward. Knowing thereafter, that it was useless to make him offerings in the form of money, his friends pressed him to accept raiment and food; these also he refused in turn, remarking smilingly, that the milk of his faithful goats, and fruit, furnished him with more sustenance than he needed, and that when a man lived in the Spirit, the demands of the body were little, indeed he said to them: "The care and thought bestowed on the body becomes less and less,

the higher man ascends into the realm of Spirit."

His friends pondered deeply over his dark and mysterious declarations. Environed as they were by a purely physical world, which they regarded as a place of extreme necessity, the fear of want continually tortured them. On the other hand they also noticed, that a few among their number had succeeded by the play of circumstances, to place themselves in a safer position, and had accumulated an amount of worldly wealth which guaranteed them against this fear of want, which filled the days and nights of their less fortunate brothers with such apprehension and dread. And yet these seemingly favored few were not in reality contented, for they feared the end of life. And why were they fearful? Had not nature favored them? Had she not given them abundance—the desire of their hearts?

A few of the most thoughtful of the villagers, had marvelled much at this strange phenomenon, and in their simplicity went to Herminio for an explanation. To their question the sage gave the simple answer: "That, no matter how much a man strives after the things that please the senses and satisfy the cravings of the body, his strivings and exertions will bring him only grief and sorrow, even after the objects he so much desires have been acquired. For as long as they wished only for things in the visible world, just so long would they be deluded and ensnared by them." While these statements were somewhat vaguely discerned by those to whom they were addressed, it was not possible for these simple men of the mountains, to appreciate the ultimate reality underlying them, as they had no conception of the paradoxical nature of

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For all truth he told them has two aspects or two sides. The real cause of human suffering he declared was the idea of separateness, or in other words the great delusion that each man cherished in his heart, namely, that he was better than his brother. You are not separate he would say, you are one, and as each one of you is a ray from the Divinity, each and every soul is therefore a part of the Infinite Light—The Light of the World.

When Herminio reached this part of his discourse he would bring his subject to a close. It was noticed, however, that when he gave utterance to these great truths his hearers were struck with reverence and became silent. The peasants asked no more questions but quietly dispersed, while Herminio betook himself to his home in the mountains.

It has been said that the appearance of the sage did not change with the years. It seemed a paradox of nature that age should be combined with buoyancy of youth. Let us follow the old man who walks in dignity along the devious mountain path leading to his abode. He carries no staff nor walking stick, he is in robust health, full of life and vigor, and his age—eighty-five years. Looking neither to the right or left but walking rapidly he soon reaches the inclosure of his lodge. Entering the hut, he at once arranges a few dishes on a small table which make up his evening meal. Nuts, fruit, and milk from his faithful goats, are the only articles of diet, for the sage never tastes flesh food.

After taking his refreshment Herminio placed some dried leaves, twigs and faggots on the hearthstone. The gloom had been deepening for some moments as it was now after sundown. As the fire leaped upward Herminio advanced toward it, and crossing his arms over his breast looked intently

into the flame. He remained in this position perfectly motionless—appearing like the carven statue of a god rather than a living man. Finally his lips moved and with great fervor and ardor he delivered himself as follows:

“I salute ye, Oh invisible Powers! Ye who have enabled me to recover my memory of the Past. I salute ye, Oh powerful Princes of Deity, who by invoking the Will of the Supreme Author of the Universe, have enlightened my understanding, so that my poor human will has become a sharer with Divinity. Ye knew my early struggles now mere memories of the past. Ye knew my sufferings and defeats, my sorrow and despair, yet through your watchfulness was I protected, so that every seeming defeat became a victory, and every sorrow found its end in joy. I will not dwell on the body of events so numerous. But rather do I enfold the essence of these experiences, and thereby make my soul-life the richer. How well memory records the time, when you opened to me the gates of knowledge and with the eye of Soul, I peered through the infinite vistas leading to the Eternal! How often I have recalled the intense joy that I experienced on that supreme occasion! How often, when lost in my meditation to the physical world, I have bathed in the Divine Essence, and again felt the deep peace, which descended on my soul at the time of that great event, like a benediction from the Archangels! How I marvelled upon that mysterious thing called Nature, of which the material Universe is the lowest form of manifestation. This ye made clear to my newly awakened consciousness, which was then for the first time made aware of its limitations. Yea, thou hast given me knowledge, and that knowledge

I have received and transmuted into wisdom. Knowing well the great truth which I became cognizant of through my higher faculties, that he who becomes illuminated loves to shed his light on others. I have lived in the world unselfishly, and presented to my brothers only parts of the great truths heavily veiled, in parable and allegory. For however much the teacher might desire to impart to fellow beings the knowledge of the great principles that govern human life, he is prevented from so doing, by the low states of physical consciousness in which they function, as the truths he would elucidate have so deep a meaning that they could not be wholly comprehended by younger souls, who are only in the initial stages of a higher evolution. So have I always appeared to my fellow men as a hermit of the mountains; and although I spend the greater part of my time in solitude and seclusion and love to meditate on the majesty of the truth, yet humanity is dear to me for above all, what is greater than the soul linked to the One!"

As Herminio finished this sentence, the fire burned low on the hearthstone, so that the interior of the hermitage was almost in complete darkness. For a few moments the silence was broken only by the low moaning of the night wind, and the occasional bleating of the sheep in the inclosure. Then on a sudden the fire burned brighter, and lit up the features of the seer, who looking again into the heart of the flame resumed in a low tone his soliloquy.

"Yea, it is true I love humanity, and have longed for a pupil. Strange is it not, that the paradoxical nature of truth and phenomena is the same on all planes of nature. In the physical world the normal man and woman desire children, so that they might express through them their love and emotions, and

that they might realize again the experiences of their own childhood in the lives of their offspring. So have I, in my solitude and old age longed for a son—one in whom I might behold the thirst for knowledge—the knowledge that reaches to the Waters of Life."

"And with what joy will I receive him! As the young mother welcomes her first born and bestows upon it her tender love and emotion, so do I look forward to the time when I am to take my son under my tutelage and note his early struggles. How the world will bruise and scar him! In his seeming defeats he will come to me, his father and counsellor, for advice and sympathy. Ah, what visions of the future radiant with hope, will I not be able to reveal to him! With what care will I describe the conditions under which he is to live in the world, so that the higher forces of the universe will be enabled to play through his consciousness. And as the earthly mother regards with keen delight the first attempts of her child when it learns to walk and watches it lest it may fall, so likewise will I guard the efforts of my son when he takes his first steps in the world of Spirit."

As our old man uttered these words his features glowed with ecstasy. It could not be the light from the hearthstone that illuminated his visage, for the fire was again burning low—so low indeed that only his profile was rendered visible against the growing background of the darkness. He made no attempt to change his position but steadily maintaining the same posture, with his eyes fixed on the dying embers of the fire continued in a low distinct tone.

"And at last I am to know the Blessing of Companionship, with one who will understand the hidden law. What a blessing then, have my elder

brothers reserved for me, in the closing years of my present life, in presenting me a pupil and son. Unlike a physical father, however, will I appeal to him. There will be that intangible something, that will bind him to me in so close a union that he will often marvel at the strange phenomenon, for it will be a kinship more exalted than even that relation which is formed by the ties of blood. He will come to me in the prime of young manhood, exulting in his strength and seeming virtues and wholly unconscious of the tortures that await him in the world of matter. And it will be my great privilege and duty to guide him on at first into the environments suitable for his further development. Even now through the higher vision I observe him clearly. A young man of twenty-four years, diligent in his business, a student of the arts and sciences and a lover of nature. He, it is, whom the gods have chosen to be my pupil. And great though be the responsibility yet cheerfully do I welcome it. From a lover of nature, my son and pupil will become a lover of knowledge, and I will be his director on the perilous way. Though steep the path and wearisome the journey, bravely and courageously will he press ever on. Knowing no fear, anticipating no defeat, he will go forward to his great ideal. In so close a union will we be at this stage of his progress, that I will be able to impress my thought on him at a distance, for he will then have become a part of my consciousness."

"And now, ye Invisible Powers, farewell for a time, for the night approaches, and I would sleep. In the hours of silence that intervene from now till the dawn, guard well my son and close his eyelids in peaceful slumber. Accord him no visions nor

even dreams, but let him rest peacefully till the morning."

As Herminio finished this last sentence, a light in the form of a golden colored star, appeared near the ceiling directly above him. Lifting his eyes and extending his clasped hands toward it, he regarded it for some moments in silence and then exclaimed: "Hail, star of Initiation whose friendly beams still shine upon me. How I welcome thy golden light I know so well! From the time of my youth, and up to the years leading to old age, thou hast been my constant watcher, never deserting me. In the earlier stages of my progress in the Spiritual Life when the path became so difficult, that further advancement seemed impossible, when doubt weakened the powers of the soul and the tempter through the allurements of the senses, sought to again ensnare me in the physical world, then would'st thou appear to remind me of my duty and destiny. Thy golden beams were always a promise of hope nearing fruition. And now on the eve of this great joy—the coming of my son—again thy bright rays descend upon me. Again I feel the Divine influx which always accompanies thy manifestation. And as thou hast by thy golden beams brought hope and comfort to me in hours of sorrow, so likewise wilt thou be the herald and promise of victory to him who is to become my son."

With these words the hermit lowered his clasped hands and bowed his head upon his breast. He could say no more. For whenever the Soul is lifted to the higher regions of pure spirit, its life and experiences take on a vividness no human language can portray. So Herminio was silent. The mysterious star which had shone so brightly above him, began to pale in luster and finally disappeared. The



occasional bleating of the sheep in the inclosure on the east side of the hermitage had now ceased altogether and as the silence deepened a complete darkness fell upon the humble home of the seer.



## CHAPTER II.

### The Character Of Anthony.

By solemn vision and bright silver dream  
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight  
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air  
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.

—The Spirit of Solitude.

In his shop in Ali, Sicily, Alonzo Diodatti was busy at his work bench repairing shoes. Although it was late in the afternoon and he had denied himself his dinner, so absorbed had he been in his work, he still kept steadily at his task. Three times shortly after the noon hour, had his good wife entered his shop from the rooms in the rear where they lived, and urged him to take his mid-day meal. But to all her entreaties he turned a deaf ear. When finally she came into the shop for the fourth time, Alonzo looked up from his work and replied:

"Woman, do you not remember that tomorrow is the Feast of the Assumption, and that all work must be finished and out of the shop before night? Antonio, my helper, failed to come today on account of the sickness of his child, and I am therefore obliged to do the work of two men. I will not take my meal until my task is finished, which will be about sundown."

Alonzo and his wife were natives of Sicily and had been married twenty years. According to Sicilian standards Alonzo was a comparatively wealthy man, having inherited lands near the city

which he had cultivated into lemon groves. His orchards were famous for the superior quality of lemons they produced, and his income from this source alone was sufficient to have allowed him to live as a gentleman of leisure. His good wife could not dissuade him from laboring long hours every day, and it was only on Sundays and days of Obligation that he rested from his labors.

There were only three persons in the Diodatti family, Alonzo, Anastasia his wife, and a foster son, Anthony Colombo. The boy Anthony was in his eleventh year, and displayed such a love for learning that he had become a close friend of Father Clementi, the village priest. Under the direction of his reverend tutor, he commenced to study the rudiments of Greek. He displayed such a disposition for knowledge that the priest advised his foster parents to send him in a few years to the University of Messina, where he would have every advantage to acquire a classical education.

Alonzo dearly loved his foster son, and he remembered distinctly how his heart swelled with pride when on a certain occasion Father Clementi had told him Anthony was a genius, and he recalled with what keen delight he had listened to the boy when he read aloud stories from the Iliad.

With these thoughts in mind, he paused a moment from his work and asked his wife where Anthony had gone that afternoon.

Before Anastasia could answer a young boy entered the room. He was lithe of figure and his features finely formed. In his right hand he carried a small volume which he proudly held out toward his mother as he approached.

"And what have you today from Father Clementi?" asked Anastasia, as she lovingly stroked

with her right hand, the curly black locks of her little foster son.

"It is a book of verses. Father Clementi told me to study them well, so I would be able to recite them from memory. He was much pleased with the verses I read today, yet he says he much rather prefers to hear me recite than read.

"And what about your Greek lesson?"

"We did not study it today. I had some verses with me that I had written myself, and when I showed them to him he smiled and was so pleased that he talked of nothing else during the whole hour. He seemed to forget my Greek lesson and talked only of the verses."

While the boy went on with the story of his afternoon's experience with the priest, and again referred to his poetical effusions, his dark eyes beamed and in the animation of his recital, he gave free play to his child-like enthusiasm.

"Mother," he continued, "will it not be a great day for me when I go to the University of Messina to become a learned man? Father Clementi says I should go in my sixteenth year. I have to wait then five years. How long the time will seem!"

"The time will pass quickly enough for your parents," said Alonzo, speaking for the first time. "But you shall go for we have promised it. Your father is willing and glad to be able to give you advantages that he never enjoyed, but the day grows late. It is time I closed the shop, for the work of the day is over.

How happy were the parents before the bright future that held so much promise for their little son, and what joy could equal the gladness of their hearts.

Under the continued tutelage of Father Clementi, and the good Anastasia, the boy grew in grace and knowledge and reached his sixteenth year. At last the time had come when the call for knowledge must be implicitly obeyed. With what expectancy did our Anthony view the preparations that were being made as the time drew near—a time of magic, in which he conjured up visions of his happy future.

When at last the final farewells were said and Anthony started on his journey, he felt that keen regret the young always experience on leaving home for the first time. He was leaving the little village where all the associations of his life had thus far been staged. His boyhood friends, his foster parents, the good Father Clementi his private instructor, all these were for a time to be given up for new environments and affiliations, where amid greater facilities he might acquire from books and salaried professors, that mysterious thing called knowledge.

So in spite of his well made resolutions it was with a feeling of regret and timidity that he reached Messina.

A few days afterward, the examinations being held he was placed in the classes to which his status entitled him. He created little comment among the older students, but the fact was mentioned that his foster parents being wealthy, he would not lack for funds to pursue any special work or study, after the completion of his university career.

After a few months Anthony had begun to settle down to the routine of college life. It is here that we begin an estimate of his character. He was meditative and very reserved in manner. The amusements in which his fellow students indulged did not appeal to him. For if sincerity is conceded

to be the mark of a truly great man, then Anthony surely possessed it, for he was sincere to an extreme degree. He loved solitude more than society—solitude and meditation, these two marks of a great soul, showed plainly in his character. These he could not conceal. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons he would walk about the city and environs, admiring greatly its works of art and its historical associations. He would spend hours in the Great Square before the Fountain of Neptune, marveling at the sculptures over which the crystal waters fell in beaded cascades. The Italian marbles made a special appeal to him. As he gazed on their beauties he invested them with life. They were no longer inanimate images cut from the Carrara quarries, but had become during his long reverie, living beings, glowing with life and color—disporting themselves behind the rainbow colored water drops that showered at their feet, in the mellow sunlight of a Sicilian afternoon.

It has been said that the gift of investing inanimate objects with life, is a faculty possessed only by the poet's soul. If this be true then Anthony was a poet, for he beheld in all nature images of beauty and life. Not only did he worship beauty in nature and art for the satisfaction it gave to his aesthetic faculties, but he showed nature a deep reverence because he considered her a manifestation of the Divine Mind. "If," as he often said, "we love God, then surely we must love that which God has created. If he has implanted in our souls a love for the Beautiful, He has likewise filled the world and the universe with objects of sense to gratify that desire. Now the soul can have no higher object than the appreciation of God through His works; for by the love of nature we are drawn

insensibly by degrees to contemplate on the Creator. For if nature be the epitome of beauty, then God its Author must be beauty itself, surpassing by far that beauty of physical nature, which is only one form of His many manifestations."

Such were the sentiments expressed by our young student in his seventeenth year. Surely his was a soul consecrated to the higher things of life—a soul that will care nothing for the vanities of the world, but will be able to rise above it and its conventions.

From the Fountain of Neptune, Anthony on many occasions wended his way to the Cathedral. Here he spent many happy hours viewing the pictures of the Saints and Prophets of Old. The pulpit of white marble, sculptured in the form of a chalice, made a special appeal to him—its composition marble—its shape a chalice—its color white as the driven snow! Surely the sculptor must have been inspired when he carved from his marble block this snow white chalice, to place it amid such sacred surroundings.

In the university and in the city of Messina our young Sicilian had found his natural environment. The student life was for him a continual joy. To spend hours with learned doctors over philosophical disquisitions, to reason on the higher questions of life and the nature of the soul—to have free access to the great library, where like the English poet Robert Southey, he passed day after day conversing with the dead—they who had passed on ages before, but who have left us their immortal legacies in the printed pages of books! What a privilege to be present in so august a company! To pray with Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas! To converse with Newton on his Principia! To look through the



telescope of Galileo and Herschel! To hear the soul stirring melodies of Mozart and Beethoven! To imbibe the deep philosophy of Aristotle and Plato! To read the immortal poetry of Dante, Milton and Shakespeare! To what heights ought he not to climb when so great a help and opportunity was afforded him.

So the time passed happily and Anthony grew in virtue and knowledge. So contented and happy had he become that he seemed to live and move in paradise. Oh time of youth, thou art indeed a time of vision! But in the case of our student, the vision had already reached fulfillment. He was happy in the present. There was nothing to cause him anxiety. At the close of his University career he would retire with honors proudly won, and achieve distinction in some scientific or philosophical field. What was to prevent him from doing as he wished? Was he not the sole heir of Alonzo—the wealthiest man in Ali? And was not wealth and learning a combination of forces before which the material world must give way?

Anthony had now been three years at the University. In following his ideals amid such congenial surroundings the time passed all too rapidly. As he grew in knowledge, his habits became fixed and his character more pronounced. He was much given to meditation and frequently rose hours before daybreak to indulge in the practice. In the deep silence of summer mornings, he would sit in the open window and there alone meditate on the mystery of Being. The earth and its fullness lay at his feet, while above him the heavens glowed with galaxies of stars. Instinctively his gaze was directed toward them. The familiar constellations seemed to greet him as of Old. He never tired

looking at them. In his boyhood days in Ali the good Father Clementi, with the aid of star maps had taught him the names and positions of the star groups, and also the mythology connected with them. The friendly stars were his mute companions. How many hours on summer nights when he lived in the little village of Ali, he had gazed in wonder on the celestial beauties scattered in streams and clusters through the profundities of space! With what awe and veneration did he not behold the great Cross in Cygnus, which lay on its beam in such calm repose behind the star drifts in the Milky Way! How often he had followed with meditative eye that luminous zone of light, which spanning the heavens was lost to his vision near the southern horizon, where it broke through Sagittarius, to shine with renewed splendor in the southern hemisphere.

And thus we find him in the early morning hours watching the heavens. The habit formed in boyhood days at Ali, is followed by the young man at Messina. Wrapped in meditation near the open window, he gives himself up for the time, to the Great Author of the worlds, and muses on the mysteries of Creation.

In the delineation of the character of Anthony enough has been said to show that he possessed a philosophic bent of mind. Combined with this he had a poet's imagination and adored beauty in nature and art. In his profound reveries he sometimes lost sight of the objects around him, though retaining them vividly in his mind's eye. This peculiar faculty has been very well illustrated by an English poet, who in depicting the deeper stages of meditation, pictures a young woman with a pitcher in her hand standing near a hillside spring.

Thinking of her lover, she places the pitcher beneath the falling water, intending to watch it lest it overflow. But so unconsciously and so quickly does her mind glide into that deeper stage of meditation, that she no longer cognizes the object before her, and though her gaze is still fastened directly on the pitcher she

"Sees it and not sees it and lets it overflow."

This was the position in which Anthony sometimes found himself. In this particular instance as he sat on the promontory overlooking the sea, it had vanished from his gaze; yet as a mental image it was constantly before him. Then he again thought of it as an emblem of the Creator, to whose bosom all water drops must finally return. Even as the myriads of souls sent forth from the Author of the worlds, must in the fullness of time return also to Him. Then as he became receptive to the great truth and absorbed it into his consciousness he felt a strong vibration which starting at the base of the brain extended along the spinal cord; then branching from both sides of the spine completely encircled his body, spending its force in the region of the heart, the navel and lastly in the abdomen. Anthony felt the vibration so keenly that he rose from his seat, marveling much at the strange phenomenon. As he walked toward the city he recalled the fact that this experience had on another occasion occurred to him. He had been meditating on Good and Evil and the difference that must exist between them. For a long time he had been perfectly motionless, respiration having almost ceased, all the senses being apparently suspended. Then suddenly the great Truth flashed on his consciousness that Good.. was absolute and eternal, while Evil was relative and transitory. Then he remembered clearly that on the reception of this truth, a

vibration similar to the one he had just experienced took hold on him, starting as in this instance at the base of the brain and extending along the spine. Were these vibrations a proof of the accurateness of the intuitions he had received? As he asked this question another vibration stronger than either of the preceding ones shook his entire body causing three or four distinct tremors. He paused in his walk and leaning on the trunk of a tree tried to calm himself. It was now sundown and the long shadows cast by the hills and mountains heralded the approach of night, which comes quickly in these latitudes. The calm still aspect of a Sicilian evening enveloped the landscape. But of all this beauty the young man was unconscious. His thoughts were wholly taken up by the phenomena he had experienced. As he wended his way toward the city he resolved to ask the prefect of studies at the university, for some work on meditation—some authority that might throw light on the phenomena and clear up the questions that so perplexed him.

The following day he asked the prefect if the library contained such a work, but he was careful to keep his experience to himself holding it as sacred in his own consciousness.

The prefect referred him to a work by Saint Teresa of Spain, entitled "The Interior Castle," in which she describes the soul under the figure of a castle, surrounded by seven mansions. These mansions are the different stages of Being through which the mind passes on its way to the castle. Here a very marked distinction is made between mind and soul. At the beginning of the meditative process, thought functioning through the mind, whose organ is the brain is constantly raised to

higher states of consciousness as it passes through the mansions. At first, the members of the body become perfectly motionless, and all the avenues of the senses are closed, the mind experiencing a state called ecstasy. When finally the seventh mansion is reached, the thought becomes so vivid that the mind cannot contain it and it begins to function through the soul. The consciousness having passed through the seven mansions is now in possession of the castle. The human entity has had his thought raised to such a level on his journey through the mansions that he has abandoned the mind and functions through the soul.

While Anthony appreciated this explanation it was not entirely satisfactory to him. On the subject of the vibrations, Saint Teresa was silent. Was it possible that so great an authority could not enlighten him, and must he turn to other writers for light on this subject?

Thus we find our student in his nineteenth year experiencing phenomena which appeared to transcend human analogy. It is not strange that he resolved to keep his experiences a profound secret. If, he reasoned they have a meaning, some other soul at some other time, has experienced the same phenomena for every individual must have a prototype somewhere in the world who vibrates in unison with him. If this be so I will bide my time trusting that the day will come when I will meet someone who will clear up the mystery and make it plain to me.



## CHAPTER III.

### Regina the Flower Girl.

Oh! tell me where and in what lands  
Is Flora and the Roman lass?  
Where's Thais or the Ladye grande  
That was her equal in all grace?  
—"Ballad of Vanished Ladies."

Six years had now been spent in the university, Anthony having reached his twenty-second year—six years of study and of preparation for that larger field called the world, into which he was now to enter. Into what sphere of activity he would engage, he had as yet not decided. Two courses were open to him. He might take up mathematics or become a teacher of Italian literature. The latter course appealed most to him. He loved Tasso, Dante and Boccaccio. Into this field he sometimes thought he would direct all his energies and even though he should fail to attain any great distinction as a teacher, he would at least be following a vocation the pursuit of which would give him satisfaction and pleasure. With this idea in mind he began preparing himself for the final examinations.

So absorbed had he become in the final preparation, that for almost a month he had failed to take his customary walk around the city and its environs. On a bright afternoon at the close of May he could restrain himself no longer, and going forth into the sunlight he followed his old familiar route

that led past the Fountain of Neptune. A little to the right of the Fountain and not more than fifty paces from it he was surprised to see a young girl dressed in ancient Roman costume, selling flowers at a small booth which had been erected in the square. Somewhat curious to know how she had been able to secure a concession in the Great Square so near the Fountain, Anthony approached the booth and purchased a small bouquet. Struck by the beauty of the girl and the grace of her movements, he inquired as to the length of time she had been in the city.

"Only a short while," she replied fixing her dark lustrous eyes on him. "It is not more than two weeks since I came here."

"I am Anthony Colombo, a student of the University. I have resided here six years."

"How grand that must be," said the girl. "I have never had such an opportunity for study. My name is Regina Cenci. I lived in Taormina."

"Ah!" exclaimed Anthony, "that was my mother's home. I was never in the place, but it has been described very minutely to me. I am glad to know you have lived there, and hope to have the pleasure of meeting you again."

At this point Anthony was interrupted from further conversation as several persons approached the booth to make purchases. Bidding the girl good day he continued his walk along the thoroughfare, thinking all the while of the strange impression she had made on him. Surely he thought, she is a child of nature, simple and direct in her ways and habits of life. Dressed in the costume of a flower girl of Old Rome, there was no doubt she would attract many persons to her booth in the famous Square of Neptune. But how came she to



adopt such a costume? She herself certainly did not conceive such an idea. Some person of influence must have secured the concession from the city allowing her to sell flowers in the Square. These questions perplexed Anthony and he resolved to find out more about the girl. Unconsciously he repeated her name, Regina Cenci! Regina Cenci!—the words were euphonious and musical and carried a cadence to his innermost being. When finally he reached his favorite trysting place and reclined on the promontory overlooking the sea, he found himself unable to follow his accustomed line of thought. He who had been in the habit of meditating on the creative processes, and the deeper questions of science and philosophy, now found all the powers and faculties of his mind concentrated on a Sicilian flower girl. He could not account for the way in which she had captivated and enthralled him. He tried in vain to revert to his former line of thought but that, he was unable to do for any length of time. His reflections were continually interrupted. He found himself looking on the sea, yet mentally he was beside the flower booth, inhaling the perfume of the roses and admiring the loveliness of the young woman who offered them for sale. The unexpected meeting amid such surroundings, seemed like a bit of romance from Boccacio. The setting was ideal. A beautiful flower girl of Ancient Rome, offers roses and lilies for sale in the historic Square, near the Fountain of Neptune. The grace of her carriage, the suppleness of her movements, and the simplicity of her manners, would lead one to believe he was gazing on the goddess Flora herself. So thought Anthony. It was the first time in his life that he had admired a woman and around the object of his passion he clothed everything with a beauty that

was perfect and ideal. It is ever thus with a sincere lover. He loves because of a law that impells him to love, and acting in harmony with the law, sees only beauty and perfection in the object of his desire, and at a later stage he beholds naught but beauty and harmony in the whole visible creation.

It was near sundown when Anthony returned to his room in the University. Never in all his life had he spent such an afternoon. He could not control his thoughts. They rested on the Roman flower girl and there remained. Was our student with the philosophic mind about to fall to the level of ordinary humanity, and experience the universal passion? Was this love of which the poets had sung, so great a thing that he too must be included within it? Was the Divine fire of such a nature that he who came within the circle of its light and influence drawn insensibly toward it, like the moth to the flame?

Next day when Anthony started on his accustomed walk he had one object only in view, and that was to meet Regina. When he reached the flower booth he found her busily engaged in fastening a bunch of violets in the corsage of a lady with whom she was in earnest conversation. She did not see Anthony approach and was unaware of his presence until he came directly in front of the booth. At sight of him she appeared somewhat abashed and confused, asking him in an embarrassing tone if he wished any flowers? Anthony called for roses and opened the conversation by asking Regina how she liked the city.

"I cannot say I like it so well," she replied rather shyly. "It is the first time I am away from home, and it seems difficult to make acquaintances here."

"While that is true, remember you have been

here but a short time. A few weeks more and you will grow to appreciate the city and become more familiar with the people and their ways."

"Probably so," said the girl. "But I cannot forget my home in the country. I was so happy there."

"Are your parents living?"

"No. My mother died when I was a mere child, and my Aunt and Uncle cared for me, and their's is the only home I have ever known. My father worked in the sulphur mines and was a very poor man. My Aunt and Uncle are the only relatives I have in the world."

"Where do they live?"

"On a farm near Taormina."

"What a coincidence. My mother also lived there. Taormina is very ancient and rich in historical associations."

"I know nothing about the place. My aunt and uncle were not persons of learning and so they could tell me very little regarding it."

"But you have read descriptions of the city and its environs?"

"I am ashamed to confess I have not, since I am unable to either read or write."

Anthony paused. How regrettable he thought, that she whom he so much admired should be classed with the uneducated.

"Would you not like to learn to read and write?" He finally asked. "It is not too late. You are still very young."

"Indeed I would," replied the girl. "But I would wish a private teacher."

"True," said Anthony. "While it is never too late to make a good beginning, yet it is too late for you to attend school. The position would be too embarrassing. It would be better if you had a tutor."

"But how is one to employ a tutor without money? I cannot begin now for that reason, so I will have to wait."

"If you will allow me, I will help you. I myself would be your tutor, and assist you in learning to read and write."

Regina felt a keen delight at this unexpected offer. She averted her gaze from Anthony and although somewhat agitated, looked steadily at the ground. Her cheeks flushed and in the atmosphere of the moment, the heart of the simple country girl of Taormina was changed into the heart of a woman.

What manner of magic was this, which for the first time transformed the innocent mind of the flower girl into the full consciousness of womanly knowledge? While our young student looked long and earnestly on the lovely form, now animated with a new life, she regained her former composure, and was once more a semblance of the Roman Flora, in the full glory of the Sicilian sunlight.

Anthony was happy. Regina then gave him the number of the house and name of the street in which she resided, and after making an entry of it in his note book, our young student excused himself and returned to the university much elated at the success of his adventure. The following day the flower girl was the sole object of his thoughts. Impatiently he waited the coming of night. The day had never seemed so long. When finally the sun sank below the horizon he started on his errand. As he walked along the streets there was an elasticity in his steps, and a courage in his heart, such as a true lover experiences. The warmth and ardor of his Italian love nature had suddenly expressed itself, and in the soul of this simple peasant girl of Taormina he saw the whole world.

When Anthony reached Regina's apartment, he found she had laid aside the costume of flower girl and was in conventional dress. She greeted him with her usual simplicity, and her natural unaffected manner made him feel perfectly at ease.

"It is a beautiful evening," he declared, "and you seem dressed for a walk. Why not postpone the first lesson until tomorrow and take advantage of the splendor of the night for a walk along the sea shore? I will show you my favorite trysting place and we can converse there free from interruptions."

"It shall be as you say," said Regina, and arranging a few flowers in her hair they left the apartment together.

"Tell me," interrogated Anthony, "how you came to have so special a privilege, as to locate your flower booth in the Great Square so near the Fountain? Some friends having influence must have aided you?"

"Yes, that is true. Father Secchi, an old priest of Taormina, befriended me. He knew several of the city officials and gave me a letter asking them to grant me the concession in his name. This they did unhesitatingly, I appreciate the favor very highly, for I know I have the best place for vending flowers in the whole city."

"And who gave you the idea of adopting the costume of the Roman flower girl?"

"That also was Father Secchi's suggestion. He said it would attract attention and out of curiosity people would buy, who otherwise might never come near the booth."

"He is wiser in his generation than the children of Light," thought Anthony. "I suppose he is also a friend of your aunt and uncle who live at Taormina?"

"Indeed he is," replied the girl. "He has been a loyal friend of the family for many years. When my father died he became my constant advisor and has helped me in so many ways that I can never forget him."

"And what is the name of your aunt and uncle?"

"Angelo and Beatrice Cenci. They are both very old. They were married at the age of eighteen and have resided on the farm where they are now living for fifty years."

"Beatrice, that was my poor mother's name. She also came from Taormina, and died a few days after giving me birth. These are strange coincidences I can assure you. Neither of us have ever known a mother's love, it is a blessing and a benediction that we have never known."

By this time they had reached the promontory overlooking the sea. As they seated themselves on the smooth ledge of rock the moon rose in unclouded splendor, and casting over the water in the straits a sheen of polished silver, flooded the east with light. A gentle zephyr stirred the vegetation which grew in wild profusion along the cliffs; while the great trees standing like sentinels, nodded their heads to and fro in the moonbeams.

Was ever a scene more glorious thought Anthony. And almost unconsciously he took the hand of Regina and held it in his own.

For some moments the two sat in silence admiring the beauty of the night. Then Anthony pressing gently the hand of Regina, asked her to tell him her life's story.

"My father," she began, "was a laborer in the sulphur mines near the town of Palermo, where we resided at the time of my birth. A few weeks after I came into the world my mother died and I was

placed under the care of my aunt near Taormina, where father removed shortly after our home was broken up. Under the good care of my uncle Angelo and aunt Beatrice, I reached my fifth year when my father worn out by the heavy work in the mines also passed away. Bereft of both parents I was now under the sole charge of my aunt and uncle—my only relatives. From that time on I remember clearly the common events of my simple life. I helped my aunt Beatrice with the household duties, while uncle Angelo worked in the fields. They loved me tenderly and on account of my habit of gathering wild flowers they called me their little flower girl. Many, many mornings during the summer months I arose long before the dawn, and leaving them asleep, stole out of the house to gather the wild flowers that grew in such great profusion in the nearby fields. This habit of gathering flowers has never left me and sometimes I even dream I am out again in the early dawn picking the wild roses, that grew around my humble Taormina home."

"You are a real child of nature," replied Anthony. "But now pray tell me something about the house in which you lived. Was it built of wood or stone?"

"The house was built of stone, and despite the scorching rays of the Sicilian sun was very cool in summer. It stood off from the main road several hundred feet, and was completely hidden by trees and foliage. All over the walls and along the window ledges, the clinging vines of the morning glories had been trained to creep; and I remember clearly how my aunt always cautioned me not to pick them. With painstaking labor she had trained the vines to creep along the cold gray stones, until they completely covered every inch of the walls, so that our home had in reality the appearance of a bower in

the wilderness. There were only two rooms—a small kitchen and a room somewhat larger which we used as a living room, dining room and bedroom all in one. The walls and ceiling were whitewashed and above the beds were hung some large unframed pictures of the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Christ. My aunt Beatrice was very pious and these pictures were her special care. Having come down to her from her grandparents, and depicting as they did, events in the life of the Saviour, they were to her doubly precious.”

“And did your aunt Beatrice explain to you the meaning of the pictures?”

“Yes, she told me in her own simple way the main events in the Life of the Christ. But it is to Father Secchi that I owe what little knowledge I have of Bible history. I remember very distinctly the first time he called at our home. It was on the occasion of my seventh birthday. Uncle Angelo was sick and Father Secchi had called to see him. He took quite an interest in me and related to us stories from the Bible. During the summer season he would call at our home about once a month, and that was on Sunday afternoon. I always looked forward to his visits with the keenest pleasure. As I grew older his interest in me increased. But he never suggested that I should go to school or even attempt to learn to read and write. “God takes care of His little children,” he said, “when you are ready for those things, a way will open for you to learn. Meanwhile help your aunt Beatrice, with her household duties, have no fear or worry as to the future, but live hopefully each day growing in grace and beauty. Finally the time may come when you will leave your home, but even then, you will



do so with regret, for that is the experience of everyone who goes out into the world."

"So under the influence of Father Secchi and my good relatives, the years passed happily until I reached my seventeenth year. Then there rose within me a longing, a longing to know something of life and its experiences aside from the daily routine to which I had been accustomed. I could not define this feeling. At first it was very indefinite, but it grew in strength day after day and finally took entire possession of me. Then a short time ago, during one of Father Secchi's visits, I told him of it—told him of this indefinite, insatiable longing—this deep-seated desire to know more of the world than my limited opportunities had up to this time afforded me. I asked him if this desire was genuine, or was it mere fancy on my part?"

"He said it was perfectly natural I should have such promptings—that it was time I should leave the narrow circle of the home for wider and more varied experience, which the great outer world had in store for me. "You are not alone in this desire," he would say; "for in the life of every normal young man and woman, a time approaches when these promptings become so strong that they must be obeyed. It is the Divine Intention. A part of the plan of the All-Wise Creator. Now your case is in no way different from the rest. You are a part of the great humanity that is forever seeking to express the Divine Will. Now you must trust your intuitions and be guided by them. I, myself, will help you to make this first step in the world. It is my intention that you should go to Messina. I have a friend there, who I will ask to favor you in my name. You have always loved flowers; we will ask this friend of mine to get you a concession as

a seller of flowers, in the Great Square near the Fountain of Neptune. We will also ask that you be allowed to wear the costume of a flower girl of Ancient Rome. This will attract people to your booth that otherwise might never come near it. I have no doubt of your success. The simplicity of your manners and your grace and poise will insure that. As a general rule people having the artistic sense are the only ones who frequent the vicinity of the Fountain, so that your patrons will be among the better classes of Messina."

"On his very next visit," continued Regina, "Father Secchi gave my uncle a letter addressed to his friend in Messina, and advised my uncle to bring me here to this city at his earliest convenience. At first my uncle did not give his consent to the plan, but finally aunt Beatrice and myself aided by the arguments of Father Secchi overcame his scruples and he gave his consent. Three weeks ago we came to Messina. On presentation of Father Secchi's letter I was given the concession near the Fountain in the Great Square where you met me. You have now the story of my simple uneventful life. It can not be of much interest to you; for your experiences being of so different a nature would hardly allow you to appreciate the life of one whose activities had occupied so narrow a circle."

"On the contrary," replied Anthony, "I am interested all the more. The desires and promptings that urged you to leave your home and go forth into the world, were identical with my own. At about the same period—my sixteenth year, these inner urgings also took possession of me, with the result that I, under guidance of a priest—the good Father Clementi, found refuge here in the university, where I might assuage my insatiable thirst for

knowledge. I have drank deep at the Fountain of Learning, yet something tells me that all this effort is but the beginning—that I must live my life in the world of men and women and there get through experiences, the knowledge intended for me. Like your advisor, Father Secchi, I believe our intuitions are Divine, and that we should follow them. For when we obey these promptings, we feel a joy and happiness that words can not express, and if human language fails in picturing so happy a state, surely we have been aided by the Divine Grace and approached in a minor degree toward that great felicity that only the angels know.”

Regina listened intently to every word that Anthony uttered. She felt the blood rise to her cheeks. She could not control the current of her surging thought, nor could she still the beating of her heart. In describing the duties of life and the homage due the Creator, the good Father Secchi had sometimes waxed eloquent; yet here was a young man many years younger, whose language was more powerful and more eloquent than his! Surely, if fate had reserved Anthony to be her companion, she was indeed most fortunate, for already she was beginning to feel something deeper than mere friendship for him.

“Tell me,” she asked Anthony after a short pause, “the story of your life. I am anxious to hear it.”

Then Anthony recalling the memories of the past recited his life's story. Of his humble birth, in the home of Alonzo at Ali, of his first tender recollections of the good Anastasia and the events of his childhood. Of the friendly interests taken in him by Father Clementi when he reached the age

of boyhood. How the good Father had by his able scholarship, advanced him so well in his studies, that at the age of sixteen he knew the rudiments of Latin and Greek, and had developed such a thirst for knowledge, that his foster parents sent him to the university that same year. Of the friendships he had made there with the learned doctors and professors of the faculty; of the time of his graduation, which was to take place the following June, when Alonzo and Anastasia were expected to be present; and lastly of his meeting with Regina, which was to be the greatest factor in his entire life, though of that he little dreamed. When Anthony had finished his narrative, the evening was half spent and Regina reminded him that it was time they should return to the city, yet they lingered on; for in the charm and beauty of Night, with that sweet converse between congenial souls, all consciousness of time is lost, so that it was well on toward midnight when they rose to go.

As they walked along the ledges of limestone which bound the edges of the cliffs, Anthony beheld in Regina a grace and beauty that appealed to the highest emotions of his being. In the glory of the moonlight he saw a loveliness, which he worshipped in mute adoration. On his return to his apartments, he remembered that the great English poet, Lord Byron, had on a similar occasion, celebrated in verse the feminine graces which now so enraptured him and going to his library, he opened his favorite translation of the poet's works, and found in the "Hebrew Melodies," the poem entitled "She Walks in Beauty,"

"She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
Thus mellow'd to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less  
Had half impair'd the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,  
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow  
But tell of day in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent."

With great feeling and passion Anthony read aloud the exquisite lines that breathed so much of tenderness and love. "It is a lyric of beauty," he said to himself, "and was not my beloved Regina as beautiful in the moonlight as Byron's Hebrew maiden? The glowing stanzas depict so clearly her natural simplicity, the beauty of her face and form and the love of her innocent heart, that in reading them I too, take on the poet's condition and feel the Divine inspiration stir within me."

How long our hero continued to read, he knew not. Finally he closed the volume which he continued to hold lightly in his hands and fell into a deep reverie. He recalled the happy day on which he had first met Regina and the incidents that had

led to their acquaintance and friendship, and now knew that he loved her. He continued to muse till sleep overcoming him, obliged him to retire, where in the realm of dreams he hoped to see visions of a happy future.

Sleep on, unconscious, innocent, trustful youth! May the night bring you dreams and phantasies and envelop you with a spirit of joy, in which your soul for a few brief hours may share. For the curtain which hides from view, the great drama of your life has not yet been lifted; but when at last it is withdrawn and the shifting scenes present themselves in quick succession, 'tis hoped you will not play the coward's part, and that when the climax is reached you will not flee from the beauty of your own soul, which you will behold for the first time—naked before the background of the universe.

May the superhuman powers so aid you, that when the supreme moment comes you will be able to meet the new conditions that your progress and evolution demand, and least of all, may the demon fear, have no hold on you, but instead may Angelic Hope with bright pinions, be your sole conductor, and with her fair finger, to the realm of bliss and achievement ever point your way.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Courtship of Anthony.

For valor is not love a Hercules,  
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?  
Subtle as Sphinx, as sweet and musical  
As bright Apollo's lute strung with his hair;  
And when Love speaks the voice of all the gods  
Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.

—Love's Labor Lost.

Every afternoon about two hours before sunset, Anthony and Regina repaired to the promontory overlooking the straits. Here the student taught the young flower girl the art of reading and writing. In the character of Anthony one could easily observe the qualities of a modern Abelard; and in the sweet trustful countenance of Regina, the famed beauty of Heloise. For in the relations to each other as tutor and pupil—one anxious to teach and the other willing to learn, there could be seen a semblance of Abelard and Heloise, the medieval lovers of nine centuries ago.

It was with some difficulty that Regina mastered the rudiments of writing, but under the painstaking care of her teacher, she was at length awarded with success and great was her joy when she wrote her first letter to her aunt Beatrice at Taormina.

Six months had now passed since the eventful day when Anthony had met Regina in the Square

of Neptune. In the meantime he had graduated with honors. Alonzo and Anastasia were present at the exercises, returning to their home at Ali on the day following.

Anthony remained in Messina, not only because he had decided to become a teacher of Italian literature, and desired to be in constant touch with his professor who lived in the City, but mainly from the fact that his beloved Regina was living there also. How could he leave her? She who had been the new inspiration of his life—who appealed to him most strongly in the simple character as peasant and flower girl—how could he abandon her?

And so we find Anthony remaining in Messina after the university was closed for the term. Business and love, but principally love, holds him there. The young Abelard cannot forsake the object of his passion—he must be near his beloved Heloise. How dear to him are the few hours before sundown when he gives her instructions, and the long evenings spent in sweet converse on the old, old subject, though ever, ever new to the neophyte in love for the first time.

On a certain evening toward the end of June, when the lovers had repaired to the promontory, Regina opened the conversation by referring to the great love which had now become the dominating factor in her life, to which everything else was insignificant in comparison. Then clasping her beloved by the hand and lowering her voice exclaimed:

“Anthony, now that we are betrothed let us spend the few weeks that remain before our marriage at my old home near Taormina. I am sure my aunt Beatrice will be glad to have us come. Somethings impels me to go back to my relatives. I wish



to be their little flower girl again before I become a wife. Let them see me and love me once more as their little Regina—their little flower girl as of Old. What do you think of the idea?"

"It is very good and I quite agree with you," replied Anthony, "and I also think it would be well to have my foster mother the good Anastasia accompany us."

"When shall we start?"

"Tomorrow."

"Then as lovers, this will be our last night on the promontory," said Regina. "This seat overlooking the straits, holds the secrets of our love. We have spent many happy hours here—the happiest of our lives and I will always hold the place in tender memory."

"Yes," replied Anthony, "nor can I do otherwise. Before I met you, it was my favorite trysting place. Here I repaired to rest myself in the late afternoons after days of hard study. In my deep musings I imagined myself very happy, and there seemed nothing wanting to complete my felicity."

"Then you came into my life. A flower girl of Rome—that ancient Rome of the Caesars, and you taught me love. Here on this stone seat, I first thought to banish you from my memory, but try as I would, the effort always failed. Then I grew to love you, and in that love I found a happiness of which I had never before even dreamed. This promontory alone is the mute silent witness of the tender words we have spoken and the memory of the place shall never leave me. It is with regret that I leave it even as a lover; though I know we shall return as husband and wife at a future time, to live over in memory, the happy days of courtship."

"Yes, Anthony, you mention the happy days of courtship; of all the days they are indeed the happiest. Let us remember them well and value them highly, for sorrow and care may be our portion afterwards."

"Yes, but while that is true, you should not dwell so long on the serious thought. Let lighter fancies rule your mind for the present. We have happiness before us."

"I am glad you are so cheerful and I will try to banish the gloomy thoughts that seem to so thoroughly possess me," replied Regina.

Thus the lovers talked until far into the night, of their hopes and visions of a happy future.

On the following day they made the journey by rail to Taormina. At the station Anthony hired a conveyance to take them to the farm of Angelo which was about three miles from the town. The way was over a white dusty limestone road, which contrasted strangely with the heavy Sicilian vegetation in the closing days of June. After driving nearly three miles they left the main road and turned into a sort of lane, at the end of which was the farm house. When Regina pointed out the place to him Anthony uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"It is as you have said, a bower in the wilderness," he cried. "I cannot see the house for the vines and morning glories. As the home of your childhood, it is indeed an ideal place, and it is now clear to me why you wished to return to this fairy-like bower, that holds the cherished memories of your earliest years."

"Yes, I had a definite longing to return, for try as I might, I could endure separation from my relatives no longer. In my desire to be with them I would picture in my mind every nook and corner of

the old home, and even the white limestone paths over which I used to run in my bare feet, chasing the butterflies during the long summer mornings. Sometimes when these memories played so heavily on my heart-strings, I suffered the acutest pain, and it was on account of these remembrances, that I was so despondent and gave expression to the gloomy thoughts which so occupied my mind the last night we were in Messina. But see, there on the porch stand my aunt and uncle to welcome us. Aunt Beatrice has already recognized me. Let us leave the carriage here and hasten to meet them."

Alighting from the conveyance, they entered the little yard and going up to her aunt Beatrice, Regina embraced her tenderly. Then she introduced Anthony as her betrothed, saying:

"This young man is Anthony Colombo. We met in Messina and learned to love. He is a university graduate. At the completion of his examinations which he passed with honor, we became engaged and a few evenings ago, I suggested that we pay a visit to my old home, so here we are. Uncle Angelo, I trust you will not think me rude or hasty in so important a matter. It is our intention to spend the few remaining weeks of our courtship here with you; then we will be married by my old dear friend Father Secchi and start on our honeymoon. Anthony is the sole foster son of Alonzo Diodatti of Ali, a wealthy man, who owns lemon groves near Messina. We will have plenty of money to spend on our honeymoon and to keep us in comfort forever afterwards. Oh, it is so great a thing to be so happy!"

"Regina is happy," said Anthony, as he clasped the hand of uncle Angelo, "she is impulsive and impetuous and reveals on the exterior what she feels

in her heart. Thus is it ever with the happy children of nature. They are so filled with self-forgetting impulses. Yet there is a reason why she should revel in such a spirit of happiness. These ideal surroundings—this fairy-like bower in the wilderness—these shaded walks, trailing vines, morning glories and butterflies, are enough in themselves to implant in an innocent heart the conditions which assure joy and “the peace that passeth understanding.” Uncle Angelo, it was agreed between us when we left Massina, that I would help you work in the fields, while Regina would assist aunt Beatrice with the housework during our stay here.”

“That is well my boy,” replied Angelo. “Regina can do her part, but I fear your hands are too soft for the hard exhausting labor in the fields. Look at mine.”

Angelo extended his hands and Anthony noticed the great breadth of the palms, the heavy fingers, knotted, hardened and calloused with toil.

“For over sixty years,” continued Angelo, “I have done manual labor, sowing, plowing and reaping. I commenced to work in my fifteenth year. If it is your wish, you may help me in the lighter work on the farm until the work proper of reaping begins.”

“And why should I not continue to work on with the reapers?” asked Anthony.

“Because the work is hard and the hours long—from daybreak till dark. I do not think you could stand up under the strain.”

“Though it may be difficult, as you say, yet I will try it. My father was a reaper. The good Anastasia, my foster-mother, used to tell me about him. He died a few months before I came into the world. Then my mother died a few days after giving me birth. The good Anastasia, in whose house

I first saw the light, told me of my father. And what she knew, she obtained from my mother's lips direct. I shall indeed work with the reapers. What the father did, the son will do. I will do it in memory of him."

"Very well," replied Angelo. "It shall be as you say; and you can begin tomorrow by helping me pick fruit. Now let us join your betrothed and your aunt Beatrice at dinner."

As they entered the house, Anthony was struck by the simplicity of the surroundings. The furniture was of the crudest pattern. There were no books. The floors were bare, but scrupulously clean. On the wall above the bed, were the three large unframed pictures, as described by Regina, depicting scenes from the life of The Christ, the Crucifixion, Resurrection and the Ascension. This was the only evidence of art the home contained. The atmosphere of the place, however, had a soothing effect on Anthony, for no sooner had he entered the room, when he felt the calmness of perfect peace descending upon him like a benediction.

The dinner over, Anthony and Angelo went forth into the fields where they spent the afternoon in earnest conversation on the subject of Sicilian farming. As the day drew to its close, Angelo pointed out the prickly pear and lemon trees, the fruit of which they would pick on the morrow.

That night an animated scene presented itself in the home of Angelo and Beatrice. Regina, their little flower girl, had returned to them, with her betrothed, a young Sicilian of education and attainment. What mirth and conviviality on so great an occasion flowed around their humble hearthstone! With what earnestness did not Angelo relate the story of his early struggles. And what a relief it

was to know and feel that the fifty-five years of married life and arduous labor, had been sanctified by a belief in God and an absolute trust in his Providence.

The next morning Anthony helped Angelo to pick prickly pears and lemons. This form of labor was followed for several weeks, alternating with other light work on the farm. When finally harvest time arrived, in the hot month of August and the annual task of the gleaning of the fields took place throughout all Sicily, Angelo engaged several reapers to harvest his grain. This was the opportunity for which Anthony had waited. Tying a red handkerchief around his neck and providing himself with a corn scythe, he joined the band of reapers. As they worked, they sang stanzas of song to the Virgin and Saints in which he heartily joined. On Sundays, he attended the three o'clock Mass in the morning, for there is no cessation of work in Sicily, when once the harvest has begun, until it is finished. The work goes on uninterruptedly. So Anthony labored with them from dawn till dark and slept on the ground as they did, and as his father did before him. It was hard training for the young graduate and his hands were blistered and sore, but he must experience the life his father lived and know the hardships through which he passed. So we find him daily at work with the reapers, enduring the intense heat of the August sun, and sharing their simple fare with them.

When at last the harvest was finished, Anthony experienced a deep sense of satisfaction, for he knew something of the reapers' life, and the unremitting toil they so willingly endured. A few days before the completion of the work, Alonzo and Anastasia arrived from Ali and took up quarters in

a hotel at Taormina, in order to be present at the wedding of Anthony which was to take place within a few days. The harvesting being now fully completed, there was nothing talked of in the home of Angelo save the preparations for the marriage. On the following Sunday the happy group travelled by conveyances to Taormina, to be the guests of Father Secchi, who was to perform the wedding ceremony on the morrow.

Regina was more than elated to meet her old friend Father Secchi. The spiritual advisor and instructor of her childhood, was to officiate at her marriage; bowed down with years the venerable priest was a type of the patriarchs of Old. He greeted Regina with that love and affection which characterizes the spiritual Father.

"And so my little flower girl has returned," he said, "and brought with her, her betrothed, this young gentleman of learning from the University of Messina. Had you any idea that such a happy event was to happen to you, when you left your home to set up your flower booth in the famous Square of Neptune?"

"No, Father, I did not; for you know it is declared that we can never know the future. I can only say that I obeyed you implicitly in going to Messina, and it is therefore in the following of your advice and instructions that this great happiness has come into my life."

"I am glad, child, to see you so happy. Indeed the culmination of your visit to Messina, came rather sooner than I, myself, expected, and I feel that your meeting with Anthony was in no way by chance or accident, but was an event prearranged

by Providence itself. In the early years of my ministrations as a priest, I believed in chance happenings and accidents; but with the knowledge of later years I became ashamed to hold such beliefs, for if accidents are real and not relative, then God's laws are capricious and not immutable."

"And I like you, have come to the same conclusion," said a deep voice from the doorway.

Surprised at the intrusion, the members of the party turned their gaze in the direction of the speaker; Anthony being first to recognize him, sprang forward and clasping both his hands exclaimed:

"Father Clementi, you here! I had invited you to our wedding, but you sent word you were ill and could not come."

"Yes, I was at the time, but the good news rejuvenated me and I quickly recovered from my depression. I am glad to be with you on this great event in your life. I was your first instructor, and I was so delighted in you for the proficiency you showed in Latin and Greek. Do you remember the interest you took in astronomy and the happy evenings we spent studying the star groups?"

"Indeed I do; I can never forget those happy hours and I am more than pleased to know that you and Father Secchi, who were the teachers of Regina and myself, are both to be present at our marriage."

"Yes, it is a happy reunion," interposed Father Secchi, "and as soon as the dinner is over, I suggest that we set out for the site of the Ancient Theatre; our entire party will enjoy the outing. Is it so understood?"

There was no dissenting voice; so when the meal was over the little group started for the environs of Taormina. The two priests led the party over the



limestone ledges that led to the Theatre, and the Ancient site of what had once been one of the famous edifices of Antiquity. From the topmost round of seats, a scene of beauty unfolded itself to the beholders like a panorama. On the right, Mount Etna reared her majestic pinnacle of snow, from whose white cone a dark curling wreath of smoke wound slowly upward. Southward the blue waters of the Mediterranean sparkled in the Sicilian sunlight, the whole view making a scene which in its ensemble, has been declared by travellers to be the finest in the world.

"Have you ever witnessed a scene more beautiful?" asked Father Secchi, turning to Anthony.

"Never," replied the young graduate. "During the years of my stay in Messina, my favorite trysting place, a promontory overlooking the Straits, was a retreat where I spent many happy hours. The spot was a most secluded one and commanded a view of the Rock of Scylla and the Whirlpool of Charybdis. There for many, many hours, have I sat in silent meditation, musing on that great thing called Nature and the mystery of Being. Then later, when Regina came into my life and became my idol, the place almost became sacred to me, for it was there that we breathed out the story of our love, and while it will always occupy a place in my heart, on account of these tender memories and associations, yet I do think this scene to be the finest, beauty alone considered; yet for a scene to be forever cherished in the memory, give me my promontory overlooking the Straits of Messina."

"Yes, replied the priest, "there is no place revered by the memory as the place hallowed by love. These memories are sacred. It is a part of

the Divine Plan in God's Creation, that no length of time can erase the record from the consciousness."

It was now near sundown. As the little band of devoted friends wended their way down the precipitous ledges of limestone, the entire sky in the West was bathed in the glories of a Sicilian sunset. Long streamers of red and purple light, rising from the sun behind the sea, stretched their quivering forms almost half way to the zenith. A few scattered clouds tinged with purple and gold, moved majestically on the horizon. Far out to the sunset line, a few fishing boats floated idly on the waves, attended by the ever-present seagulls, uttering their hoarse guttural cries. As the short twilight deepened into night, the sky lost its rosy color, and the glorious scene began to fade as it were, into air, for the last gleams of day were now buried in the dark waters of the Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER V.

### Adventures in the Alps.

Not vainly did the early Persian make  
His altar the high places, and the peak  
Of earth's o'er ranging mountains, and thus take  
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek  
The Spirit in whose honor shrines are weak  
Uprear'd of human hands.

—Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

The marriage of Anthony and Regina was solemnized in Taormina on the following day. At the conclusion of the wedding breakfast, a discussion arose among the members of the little group, as to the manner in which the young couple should spend their honeymoon. Alonzo had provided Anthony with ample funds to defray the expenses of the journey, and had purchased him a house in Messina which was to be his future home. But for the present, the all absorbing topic was the itinerary of the honeymoon.

"I do not care now," said Regina, "to visit the European capitals. Let us have a more romantic journey."

"I agree with you heartily," said Anthony. "For eight long years I have been deep in study. A visit to the great centers at this time would not interest me. Let Paris and Rome wait, at a later time we will visit them, but for the present I would suggest that we should go to the extreme northwest of Italy, and plunge into the heart of the Alps. We

will stop at some Alpine village, and each day go forth into the foothills of the mountains, returning to the village at night-fall. I have read much of such excursions and they must be most romantic. What say you Regina?"

"That it will be a novel journey. I will be at home in the mountains. Their immense and silent forms always had a strange fascination for me."

"Then it is agreed that this is the way we will spend the next few weeks, and on our return to Messina, where we are to make our permanent home, I will take up my duties as teacher in the university."

Several hours after the young couple had decided on their novel honeymoon, preparations were hastily made for the departure. Under the stress of emotions which they could not conceal, it was apparent every one felt the coming separation. When at last the final farewells were said, the young man and wife, showered with best wishes from their relatives and the blessing of the two priests, took their final leave, the happy event became naught but a memory.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days later the young husband and bride reached the village of Chamouni. It was sundown when they entered the charming Vale. The shadows were already lengthening along the foothills, while the peaks were still reflecting the beams of the setting sun. Fatigued with travel, they repaired at once to one of the village hotels to rest and refresh themselves after their arduous journey.

On the following morning shortly before noon, Anthony secured the services of a guide, who was to conduct them into the valley. They had gone but a short distance from the village when they met a band of Swiss singers. Among their number there was a youth, who could not have been more than

seventeen years of age. He carried his harp with a grace and abandon that would have done credit to a harpist of maturer age. The perfect freedom of his movements, and the happy expression of his eye, seemed to assure a tranquillity of mind in perfect keeping with the artistic life of the true minstrel. Bowing low before our little group, he asked them if it was their wish that he should entertain them with a song.

Struck with the natural charm of his manner and the original quaintness of his Swiss costume, Anthony and Regina at once consented. Accordingly Carlo, for that was the young troubadour's name, set his harp on the ground and commenced to sing. The wild notes of the song, together with the wonderful warbling that accompanied it, at once won the heart of Regina, who prevailed on her husband to have the young troubadour accompany them into the valley for the day.

"If it is your wish," said Carlo, "I will gladly spend the time with you. I can always sing better if I am engaged in advance, for then I make friends of my patrons as well as listeners."

Throwing his harp lightly over his shoulder the flaxen haired singer, preceded the young couple on the way, while the guide walked on in advance. The marvellous scenery of the region was a source of wonder to Anthony and Regina, but on the guide and the minstrel it had no such effect. To the splendid pictures that were presented on every hand they seemed totally oblivious. Accustomed as they were to the beauties of the valley, they walked on in silence, until they reached the foothills within sight of Mount Blanc.

Here Anthony declared they would rest for the day, and while the troubadour was engaged in setting his harp on the ground, so that he would have a comfortable position while singing, the young professor glancing upward beheld the "Monarch of Mountains," rearing her snow clad summit above the clouds and lightnings. Instinctively he felt that the power that "sunk her sunless pillars deep in earth" and "filled her countenance with rosy light" so aptly described by the poet, still brooded over the valley.

After they had rested themselves for some time, Carlo said he was ready to sing. "I will sing for you," he said, "a song that my mother taught me when I was a child. My mother was a Greek and the scene of the tale is laid in Ancient Greece. The song is somewhat lengthy—containing some sixty or more stanzas, but it conveys a mystical truth that I always love to present, so I will ask you to bear with me till I finish the recital."

So saying the young troubadour touched the cords of his harp with such lightness and agility that his listeners were delighted at the perfection of his art. Then to the accompaniment of the simple yet beautiful melody, he sang the following prelude:

Hail gentle shepherd of the hills,  
My Muse inspiring me,  
This simple song of fields and rills,  
I dedicate to thee.

For thou art near to Nature's heart,  
Thou livest far away,  
From busy scene of street and mart,  
And civic splendor gay.

A goat's rough hide thy loins embrace,  
Thy bright eye beameth fair,  
And in thy happy mien I trace,  
A sweet contented air.

For on thy sloping mountain side,  
A God-like glory gleams;  
And in thy vales where streamlets glide,  
A heavenly lustre beams.

With joy I hail thee, gentle swain,  
Who playeth pipes of Pan;  
Whose bronzed cheek in sun and rain,  
The morning zephyrs fan.

My simple art; my simple theme,  
In echoes wild and free;  
Of vision and of poet's dream,  
I dedicate to thee.

As the troubadour sang the last lines of the prelude, his eye glowed with rapture, and pausing a moment as if to gain greater inspiration, he again struck the quivering cords of his harp, and commenced his theme which he entitled:

## THE SHEPHERD'S PROPHECY.

### I.

Dark was the night in Ilion's vale,  
For trembling Cynthia shed no ray;  
Nor twinkling star its lustre pale,  
On brave Avalon's lonely way.

Why doth the shepherd tempt the night?  
A night of wind and howling storm,  
When mountain spirits shriek delight,  
And lash the lightning round his form?

Above the peaks the thunder tones,  
Of mighty Jove incessant roll;  
Until afar the distant moans,  
Re-echo to the nether pole.

Avalon's mission must be grave,  
To wander forth a night like this;  
When other souls on land and wave,  
The god of sleep their eyelids kiss.

But bravely through the wind and rain,  
The shepherd presses ever on;  
Nor shall his effort be in vain,  
Although his strength be almost gone.

Toward a lodge of rough hewn stone,  
Avalon bends his weary way,  
No light in wall or crevice shown,  
To cheer him with its friendly ray.

With all his strength he hurls his form,  
Against the portal's massive beam;  
And through the soughing of the storm,  
And forked lightnings fitful gleam,

A massive form is seen to rise,  
And utter a defiant cry;  
And challenge with its bloodshot eyes,  
The call to combat or to die.



"Fiend of a father, sheathe thy sword,"  
Shouts Avalon with hurried breath,  
"I come with my prophetic word,  
My errand is not one of death.

Although thy strength be known afar,  
The fame of thy ancestral line;  
Thou canst inflict no single scar,  
For I am clothed with Power Divine.

Where is thy daughter, wretched sire,  
What did'st thou to the Grecian maid?  
What demon fann'd thy vengeful ire,  
In what love vale is Myra laid?

Though intuition's heavenly sphere  
Reveals the place where Myra fell,  
The swain lets fall no bitter tear,  
Though Avalon loved Myra well.

And in a dream this very night,  
I heard her last expiring sigh;  
Beheld her form in mystic light,  
Far past the range of fleshly eye.

Dare not conceal thy fiend-like crime,  
For know my knowledge is most sure,  
Eternal through all endless time—  
Long as Eternities endure."

Up rose the form that half conceal'd,  
Had lain in trembling terror low;  
Whose halting blood now half congeal'd,  
Refused in icy veins to flow.

**"Hold! hold! thy curse," the murderer cries,  
"I know my Myra was most fair;  
The glory of my ageing eyes,  
Oh! mock no more my mute despair.**

**But she was prone to love a youth,  
A rustic shepherd of the glen;  
An uncouth swain in very truth,  
Far, far removed from ways of men.**

**For this impulse of tender age,  
I lost the love a sire should feel,  
And in her heart in fiendish rage,  
The demon plunged his curs'ed steel.**

**Spare, spare me Zeus; spare thy son,  
Thou knowest my long ancestral line;  
What Grecian triumphs bravely won,  
Hath borne Thee records such as mine?"**

**But all in vain, the warrior fain,  
Calls on the gods to cease their ire;  
What mortal deign, on land or main,  
To prompt them from their just desire?**

**His flaxen hair so long and fine,  
The glorious gift Apollo gave;  
In blood stained threads his hands entwine,  
On high the gory ringlets wave.**

**Far from his side in circle wide,  
His red stain'd sword the murderer flings;  
And high in air while lightnings glare,  
With cries of guilt the welkin rings.**

"Debasèd wretch now crouch and hear,  
Avalon's sentence passed on thee;  
'Tis called above this mortal sphere,  
The mystic shepherd's prophecy:

For ten long years o'er oceans wide,  
Thou art condemned, the world to roam;  
Devoid of hope and manly pride,  
Denied at every hearth a home.

No bard will sing thy family fame,  
No child thy memory will revere;  
No scion to lisp a father's name,  
Or wipe from furrow'd cheek the tear.

With awful thoughts that sear and burn,  
And heart embalmed in bitter grief,  
Unto these vales thou shalt return,  
Nor wilt thy sorrow find relief.

And on a night when tempests roar,  
And forky lightnings cleave the deep,  
And thunders roll on heaven's floor,  
And friendly stars no vigil keep,

Then shall these mountain stones on high,  
Cut with sharp edge thy cursèd heel;  
When on thy way with guilty eye,  
Thou goest forth thy doom to seal.

For on yon mountain's topmost stair,  
Whose scarpèd form thou knowest well,  
Thou shalt leap forth through ebon air,  
To send thy spirit down to hell."

## II.

Hush'd is the storm; the smiling dawn,  
Comes forth with dew bespangl'd feet;  
And bird and fowl on jewell'd lawn,  
With praise and song her advent greet.

No trace remains in ambient skies,  
Now bathed in glorious sapphire light;  
To bring to mind the baleful cries,  
Of wailing phantoms of the night.

Across the hills in purple haze,  
In air serene the vapors float;  
And shepherds watch the magic maze,  
And hail the song bird's rising note.

And many a fond and glancing eye,  
That hailed with joy the early dawn,  
Is turned in love with heaving sigh,  
Toward the lodge of Avalon.

The mystic shepherd faint and pale,  
No longer heeds his fleecy care,  
Nor takes them bounding o'er the dale,  
Nor in their gambols doth he share.

But given to grief, in pensive mood,  
He muses in some mountain cave,  
Or follows through the solitude  
Some crystal streamlet's shallow wave.

And walks o'er flowery meads alone,  
'Neath meditation's witching spell;  
And in his lodge of rough hewn stone,  
Prefers in solitude to dwell.

Until the time the Fates ordain,  
According to their high decree;  
The Mystic Powers that obtain,  
Fulfillment of his prophecy.

## III.

Dark is the night in Ilion's vale,  
For trembling Cynthia sheds no ray,  
Nor twinkling star its lustre pale,  
On brave Avalon's lonely way.

Why doth the shepherd tempt the night,  
A night of wind and howling storm?  
When mountain spirits shriek delight,  
And lash the lightning round his form?

Above the peaks the thunder tones,  
Of mighty Jove incessant roll;  
Until afar the distant moans,  
Re-echo to the nether pole.

Avalon's mission must be grave,  
To wander forth a night like this;  
When other souls on land and wave,  
The god of sleep their eyelids kiss.

Aye! tis Avalon. Aye! tis he,  
The mystic shepherd of the glen;  
Who goeth forth in majesty,  
Although the night be not for men.

Upon the crest of yonder peak,  
Avalon casts his eagle glance;  
And in the forkèd lightning's streak,  
Beholds a tott'ring form advance.

'Tis Myra's sire, bent with years,  
Doom'd to return and wander slow,  
To that grim mount his conscience fears,  
For now the sands of life run low.

And mounting to the topmost stair,  
With faltering step and visage pale;  
He pauses in the ebon air,  
And all his aged members quail.

"Farewell ye vales! a long farewell!  
For Theon soon shall be no more,  
No more shall Grecian records tell  
Of exploits that the gods adore.

"No more"—but no, his accents fail,  
His quaking knees in terror sink,  
While Evil spirits round him sail  
And urge him to the mountain's brink.

Down, down in air the darting form  
Is lost beneath the peaks below,  
While flitting demons through the storm  
In hollow laughter mock his woe.

#### IV.

Long years have passed since Myra died,  
And on the hill and in the dale;  
The evening zephyrs oft have sighed,  
When shepherds told the grewsome tale.

And on the peak where Theon rose,  
To bid the vales his last farewell,  
No stunted oak or thorn tree grows,  
So Ancient Grecian legends tell.

The simple swains in accents low,  
Obedient to a Mighty Fate,  
In measur'd speech and cadence slow  
And reverential tone relate:

Of wondrous things that are to be,  
Of light beyond earth's mortal sphere;  
In whose white beams the prophets see  
Unmanifested forms appear.

That no conceal'd thought or dream,  
No Angel's joy or human sigh;  
Nor hid event in Cosmic scheme,  
Escapes the range of Mystic Eye.

And thus from age to passing age,  
Fair Ilion's hill and flowery dale;  
Wafts dulcet echoes on the sage,  
Who breathes the ever cherished tale.

And on a night when tempests roar,  
And forky lightnings cleave the deep;  
And thunders roll on heaven's floor,  
And friendly stars no vigil keep,

The legends say Avalon's grave,  
Is wrapp'd about in violet fire;  
While o'er the tomb bright spirits wave  
Responses to an unseen choir;

In memory of that fateful night,  
The vales of Greece in wildest glee;  
Re-echoed over depth and height,  
The mystic shepherd's prophecy.

The song left Carlo grave. He resumed his former air and gaiety slowly, and the little party continued their walk through the valley.

After some hours of delightful travel in the vale, they returned to the village, but before separating for the night, it was agreed that the Swiss singer should accompany them again into the wondrous region on the following day.

The same night a number of troubadours entertained the tourists at the hotel with their singing, and wonderful Swiss warbling. But to Anthony and Regina their efforts were not to be compared to that of Carlo's. There was something about Carlo's singing that seemed to have a haunting effect that could not easily be forgotten, and Regina reminded Anthony that she was more than pleased that he had been engaged to entertain them for another day.

Next morning, Carlo and the guide met them at the appointed hour, and slowly the little party again wended its way into the vale. On this occasion, however, the guide chose a path somewhat different than the one they had followed on the previous day, so that they beheld Mount Blanc from another angle.

They chose a place where they were to rest for some hours, and Carlo became very friendly while the conversation was general and animated. Anthony remarked that the troubadour was gay and careless to an extreme degree.

"Really," he said addressing Carlo, "I have never seen a youth so impetuous and happy. There must be a reason for your carelessness of mien and abandon of manner. It seems as if the whole world was yours and you never would have any anxieties for the future."

"No," smilingly replied the troubadour, "anxieties never come to me. I live my life in the eternal



Now. While it is true I am poor in purse, yet I am rich in other things—a happy spirit and a contented mind. What care I for worldly possessions? Are not the mountains, the sky and the clouds mine?"

As Carlo continued his remarks, he commenced to place his harp in a secure position and advised his patrons that he was ready to begin his song.

Then standing erect before his beloved instrument, he looked up toward the mountain and seemed for some moments lost in abstraction. With his long flaxen hair streaming over his shoulders in the gentle breeze, and the ideal expression displayed in his clear cut features he seemed to Anthony to be an embodiment of Orpheus.

For a moment the young minstrel toyed with the quivering strings of his harp. Then his eyes beamed more brightly and to the accompaniment of his simple melody, he sang the opening stanzas of his song which he called:

#### AN INVOCATION TO THE MUSE.

Transcendent Spirit of the Upper Sphere!  
Illumined Being of Unchanging Time!  
Immortal Giver of the Sacred rhyme,  
That charms the poet and the holy seer;  
Descend, descend from thy Celestial throne,  
And for a time thy humble suppliant own;  
Brush from his pallid cheek the coursing tear;  
Renew in him thy mystic Grace Divine;  
Thou who inspirest the Almighty Line  
Of those immortal singers, who have grown  
Far past the height of poets; and assign  
Thy bard some simple labor, and design

The structure of the stanzas to appear  
In some beguiling melody so fine,  
That they compel reception from the ear.

Nor to the ear alone should they impart,  
The potent charm and magic of the Muse;  
But with the sacred influence of art,  
Perforce the homely lines may blend—transfuse;  
And make a vibrant music on the air,  
In such a simple harmony of sound,  
That it might lift the bane of brooding care;  
Meanwhile the harsher tones may perchance lose  
Their dissonance, and beat a finer part  
In the commingled melody around;  
And leave a certain influence, rebound  
With minor strains, nor pause equivoc'ring there,  
But reach some eye and cause a tear to start,  
And gliding on, no ban their course impair,  
Until they touch with soothing note the heart.

Pausing for a moment the troubadour again  
looked toward the mountain. Then with a fresh  
inspiration and clearly modulated voice he com-  
menced his theme which he entitled:

### THE POET'S VISION.

#### I.

Once upon a night of Summer,  
Weary of earth's constant woes,  
I besought the god of Dreamland,  
To enwrap me in repose.

And a voice within me whisper'd,  
Do not fail to ask the muse,  
For her blessing and her guidance,  
And the hope she may infuse.

Then obedient to the whisper,  
I put all my cares away,  
And invoking her assistance,  
Soon in slumber deep I lay.

And in sleep I was transported,  
To an Ancient Grecian fane;  
Whose past glory n'er was equall'd  
Through the whole sad earth's domain.

And around the marble columns,  
And along the temple's frieze,  
Were long rows of marble statues  
Worthy of Praxiteles.

And on wall and moonlit pillar,  
In Greek characters enscroll'd,  
Were strange words of mystic meaning,  
Traced in ivory and in gold.

While I gazed in silent rapture,  
On the consecrated pile,  
Slowly there appeared a vision,  
All my senses to beguile.

There upon a marble dais,  
Standing on the topmost stair,  
I beheld an aged poet,  
With the laurel round his hair.

Though he spoke no word of comfort,  
And maintain'd a solemn mien,  
Yet I thought he shed a glory  
In the moonlight's mellow sheen.

And he bade me read a stanza,  
That shone out in magic light,  
From the facade of the temple,  
Far into the Grecian night.

And I gazed where he directed;  
With awaken'd eye of Soul,  
And beheld the fiery stanza  
Bounded by a violet scroll.

And the words that formed the stanza,  
While not symbols of command;  
Though they were of wondrous meaning,  
Were not hard to understand:

Evermore the constant sorrow,  
Evermore the constant moan;  
Evermore the Soul would follow,  
Some false pleasure not its own.

While I read the heavenly message,  
Wavering with its tongues of light,  
I beheld another marvel  
In the phantom haunted night.

For the poet made a gesture—  
Made a gesture with his hand,  
And the statues on the temple  
In accord with his command,

Took on life and flesh and color,  
Made obediance one by one;  
And then sang the mystic stanza  
All in mournful unison.

Evermore the constant sorrow,  
Evermore the constant moan;  
Evermore the Soul would follow,  
Some false pleasure not its own.

Then the glorious vision faded  
Into space, and drew away  
Into realms of the memory,  
There to hold perpetual sway.

## II.

Then I left the world of fancy,  
And beheld another morn;  
And I heard the quail and plover,  
Heard the hunter sound his horn.

Though all Nature smiled as ever,  
With a visage glad and gay,  
To my fancy she was garish,  
All unfriendly, cold and gray.

And I wander'd on unmindful,  
Through the glen and through the glade;  
And at eve I met a recluse,  
'Neath an oak tree's friendly shade.

And he spoke to me of marvels—  
Of Creation's hidden laws,  
Of the punishment of actions  
Which the guilty conscience draws.

That the world is but a picture  
Of the inner heart of man,  
And portrays the sum of motives  
Which his earthly passions fan.

That all progress and achievement,  
That ignores the growing soul,  
Will n'er banish human sorrow,  
Long as endless ages roll.

That to love the world of pleasure,  
Is to love the world of sense,  
And deny Eternal Glory,  
In the heavenly recompense.

Where the ideal is so glorious,  
And the concept so Divine,  
That the poet, saint and prophet  
Wonder at the Great Design.

While I marvell'd at his discourse,  
Slowly o'er his aged face,  
I was aided by the memory  
Some familiar lines to trace.

And forthwith in joy acclaim'd him  
And the bard of solemn mien,  
Who adorned the Grecian temple,  
In the moonlight's mellow sheen.

And I thanked the aged poet,  
And I clasped his blessed knees,  
And I saw a heavenly radiance  
Slow descending through the trees.

And he said, "Behold the vision,  
Which my Master from on High,  
Ever sends the worthy poet,  
To reward his grateful eye."

And I gazed where he directed,  
With awaken'd eye of Soul,  
And beheld the fiery stanza,  
Bounded by a violet scroll,

Slowly falling through the branches  
And the intertwining leaves,  
Till it rested in its glory  
On the aged poet's knees.

Evermore the constant sorrow,  
Evermore the constant moan;  
Evermore the Soul would follow,  
Some false pleasure not it own.

### III.

Now the import of the vision,  
I will never, never lose,  
For it is the loving favor,  
Of my laurel bearing muse.

Thus she brings a mystic comfort,  
And my years shall never fail,  
For when doubt my faith would darken,  
I relate the wondrous tale.

Thus the voice of men and worldings  
Are alike by me abhorr'd,  
And when Evil Powers tempt me,  
I repeat her mystic word:

Evermore the constant sorrow,  
Evermore the constant moan;  
Evermore the soul would follow,  
Some false pleasure not its own.

Carlo had hardly finished his recital when the guide informed Anthony and Regina that a storm was approaching and they must at once return to the village. Accordingly the little group walked briskly out of the vale and reached the hotel as the first rain drops fell.

It was the first time that the young man and wife had the opportunity of observing a commotion of the elements on so grand a scale. A storm in the Vale of Chamouni with its attendant lightning and the reverberation of its thunder, is to the visiting tourist an event always to be remembered. And it was with a feeling of awe that our young couple watched its progress, as it swept onward through the valley in its awful sublimity and grandeur.

On the following morning when they went forth into the mountains with the guide, Carlo again joined them. The Swiss troubadour by his graceful manner had completely won their friendship, and during the rest of their short stay in Chamouni, he was with them daily, entertaining them with his quaint stories and the melody of his song.

A week later preparations were made to leave the valley; though it was with great regret that Anthony and Regina bade good-bye to the flaxen haired singer and travelled on eastward into Switzerland.



## CHAPTER VI.

### The Meeting With Herminio.

Where shepherds haunt would I be seen,  
And rest me in oases green;  
No pathway would I leave untraced  
To the city from the waste.

—Goethe.

Nine days had now passed since the two travellers had left the Vale of Chamouni, and directed their course eastward.

Particularly impressed by the wild grandeur of the region that environed the little village of Bergun, they decided to stop there for some time. When they set out the next morning Anthony said they would vary the program, which up till then had been characteristic of each day. "Heretofore," he said, "we have been constantly in the company of the guide. To day we will travel independently. The ascent to this mountain is gradual. No climbing being necessary, we have no danger to fear."

For some time the young couple went on in silence. The wild beauty of the region, together with the magic stillness brooding over it, assured them that in all probability no human footsteps had ever before awakened an echo in its solitudes. As they reached the summit, they noticed it was partly hidden by a small growth of trees. As they passed through this little grove, Regina, who was slightly in advance gave a cry of surprise. Directly

before them they saw a small hut which was built partly of stone and partly of timber, the roof of which was kept in place by heavy stones and boulders. Expressing surprise at this curiously constructed house, Anthony and Regina exchanged glances of amazement. Had the hut appeared to them suddenly out of the sky, they would have been no more alarmed at so sudden a vision. As they gazed in wonder, the door opened and an old man stepped over the threshold and out into the inclosure that surrounded the hut. A long white beard covered his chest, and fell nearly to his waist. His white hair rested in curls upon his neck and shoulders, while from his pale blue eyes there gleamed a light that rested on Anthony, like a benediction. Advancing toward the young people he extended his hand to Anthony, who clasped it timorously.

"My son," said the old man, "I welcome you to these solitudes."

"I am Anthony Colombo," said Anthony bowing in answer, "and this lady is my wife. We are from Sicily."

"My name is Herminio," replied the recluse. "I call you son; but I take that privilege on account of the great difference in our ages."

"Yes," replied Anthony. "I always respect age, for it is ripe in experience."

"I like your answer. It shows a maturity of thought, which the majority of young men at your time of life, fail to exhibit."

"I thank you for the compliment. But I did not think I could express ideas now that would reveal maturity of thought. My wife and I were married some few months ago. We are now on our honeymoon."

"I am always interested in young people," continued Herminio. "Will you not come into the hermitage?"

As Anthony and his wife entered the hut, they were struck with the plainness of the surroundings. A table, three chairs and a couch completed the list of furniture which the single room contained. At one end of the room there was a fireplace on the stones of which a fire was dimly burning.

"Pray be seated," said the sage, "for after the long walk up this mountain, you and your wife, are no doubt fatigued."

As Anthony seated himself, he noticed that the chairs were of an ancient pattern. He was about to ask Herminio where, and how he had procured them, when Regina interrupted him with a question.

"Have you always lived here alone?"

"Yes, and always alone. For many years this has been my home. Although I live in solitude, I am never lonely. The little village of Bergun is three miles distant. During the summer months, I sometimes go there to meet neighbors and friends, returning at sundown, since I am never away from my home after that hour."

"Have you no family or relatives?" inquired Anthony.

"No. I was never married," replied the sage. "I have relatives but they are not in this part of the world."

"I am at a loss to know how you occupy your time here?" said Anthony. "Alone in these solitudes, it seems the monotony would drive you to madness. Then, too, you are very old, and that is another reason why you should not be alone."

"Yes, I am eighty-five," replied Herminio, "but loneliness is a condition that never gives me any

concern; for I am never affected by it. I am aware that most persons are in fearful torment if left to themselves for even a short space of time. But that is because they live in sensations and not in thought."

Anthony paused; for with all his philosophy, he could not have given such an answer.

"So those who live in thought are not affected by loneliness?" he finally asked.

"No, for they lose the desire for physical sensations. Now I have lived a long life and during all my career, I have never known what loneliness is. Now I do not shun humanity, for I love it. Yet I am in a way, independent of my fellow men, from the fact that I do not go to them for physical sensations. Drawing my life from the World of Ideas, I feed on the substance and not on the shadow."

"That is a most wonderful truth, and I would judge from your statement, that you are a follower of Plato."

"Not entirely. For no philosopher however great, has known all of the truth."

From the answer that Herminio had given him, Anthony knew he was in the presence of a man of high attainments and most marvellous intuitions. Why he chose to live alone in this wilderness, amid the solitudes of nature, was a question that most perplexed him. He knew that the saints and anchorites of Old, had often fled to the desert to lead there a life of holiness and seclusion. But this man did not appear in the capacity of a saint. He seemed rather to be a learned recluse. Furthermore there was another phenomenon connected with the visit to this strange old man, so different from anything that Anthony had yet experienced. Heretofore, whenever his ideas did not coincide with the views

of another, he could always argue the point. But to the answers of the old sage, he could raise no question. Whenever Herminio made a statement, it was final. Try as he would, he was unable to bring any objection against it. The knowledge spoken by the old scholar or recluse, whatever it might be, seemed to possess an absolute quality. Before this strange old man of the mountains Anthony was a mere child, and his speech was nothing more than the lisping of an infant. Although he felt his inability to cope with him at all, the presence of the sage inspired him with a feeling of complete rest and peace. The atmosphere of the little hermitage rested on him like a benediction, making his mind perfectly calm and tranquil. So great was this tranquillity, that it even surpassed that glow of rapture, he had felt on so many occasions when the great truths of religion were explained by the most able expounders of the Faith, from the chalice shaped marble pulpit in the Cathedral at Messina.

Truly, this man was a marvel. While his body was old, his mind was young, and there was a grace and poise in his actions showing that his emotions were under strict control. Anthony felt that any questions he might ask him, had better be well framed beforehand. So with this thought in mind, he resumed the conversation.

"I am a very young man," he said. "Just entering the world, I know I have to learn the larger lesson of life."

Herminio smiled, and looking on his pupil from the very depths of his light blue eyes, answered:

"Yes, you must have your experience. The only assurance we have that we are playing our part well, is when we know our actions are prompted by }  
a genuine sincerity."

Again Anthony paused. The old sage had given out another great truth. Seeing the embarrassment of his pupil, Herminio continued:

"No two beings in the whole world," he declared, "have the same experience; for soul experiences are as numberless and varied as the leaves in the forest. In my youth, I was most fortunate in being a lover of nature. My father was a shepherd, and in that humble calling, I delighted to share. Living in Thessaly not far from the Vale of Tempe, the days of my childhood and youth, were spent in that celebrated region of enchantment, hallowed by the memories and legends of Old Greece. How well I remember the many mornings when my sheep going before me, bounded exultingly across the crystal streams, to the place of pasturage my father had allotted to them. Even now, after all these years, my love for the shepherd's life is so great, that I have a small number of sheep and goats that I tend, in memory of that happy time."

"And who gave you the rudiments of your education?"

"My mother," replied the sage. "She spoke both Greek and French, and it was under her tutelage that I gained so good a knowledge of the French language. I remained at home till my thirtieth year, when my parents departed this life. With my little patrimony I sought refuge in the mountains of this country and have lived here ever since."

"Then you have lived here fifty-five years! Have you spent all that time in this hermitage?"

"Yes. I have never lived under any other roof. I dislike change, and when I selected this place, it was with the intention of remaining here the rest of my life."

"But pray, tell me how you spend the time during the long winter evenings?" asked Anthony.

"The most of it is spent in reading and meditation. You have not yet seen my books; let me show them to you."

Herminio rose and going to the wall near one of the square windows he drew aside a piece of sheep skin which curtained a small shelf, displaying a number of volumes handsomely bound in padded leather. Noticing the surprise of Anthony, he smilingly continued:

"You will find here some works with which you are already familiar. Here are Homer, Plato, Xenophon, and the plays of Euripides in the original Greek, and here is your Virgil, whom you so dearly love."

Anthony had always had a special love for Virgil, and turning the leaves of the volume till he found "The Georgics," he pointed out to Herminio the passages that appealed most to him.

"The Latin poet must have been a lover of agriculture," he said; "for he describes the humble work of the husbandman and the beauties of his environment in such graceful numbers, that one imagines in reading him that he is transported to sylvan scenes and lives among the bees and flowers."

"It is so with every great, true work," replied the sage. "If it is done in all sincerity, the result is not only pleasing to the author, but in time it will affect others. What the writer feels and thinks exists subjectively. It is his mission to give it an objective reality."

"Do you mean to say that a writer or inventor is not the creator of his own work?" }

"Yes, that is my meaning. There is nothing created. Everything exists subjectively in an

eternal world of ideas. Plato is right. There is nothing new in the universe. All that is, once was, and all that was, will again be."

Anthony made no answer. In his inmost being he felt the great truth which the sage had uttered.

"For what purpose, then does man exist?"

"To bring forth into the objective world, that which already exists in the Realm of Consciousness as Ideals. There is a thought world. To so co-operate with the law, that the ideas of this invisible world becomes a part of his consciousness, is the aim of the real man."

"But I infer," said Anthony, "that a man would have to be a philosopher to do that, and since the most of us are ordinary men, we must indeed fall far short of so sublime an ideal."

"No, that is not the meaning," said the sage. "Take your own case for an example. You loved knowledge for itself, and in the pursuit of knowledge you experienced a certain degree of happiness and pleasure. Later on, you met this young woman and loved her. Now your love for her was under law. You were fated to meet and to unite, so whatever experiences come to you as the result of this union, will put you further on the path of knowledge."

"And the only assurance we have," rejoined Anthony, "that we are co-operating with this law, is when our actions, as you said before, are prompted by a genuine sincerity."

"Yes," replied Herminio, "that is the only condition that justifies us in doing anything at all. It is from this standpoint, and this standpoint only, that the real man acts."

Precisely so. In the present age, however, the great majority of men imagine they will find happiness and success through deception."



"And therein they make a most fatal mistake," replied the seer. "Believing the material world to be the only reality, they pin their faith to it alone; but when the prizes of that world turn to ashes in their hands, they become miserable indeed, yet in their blindness know not the real cause of their misfortune."

"What you say is all very true, and I would like to talk with you further on these subjects; but it is now within a few hours of sundown, and we must be back to the village at sunset."

"Could you not remain in your present quarters another day?" asked the sage, "you could then make me a visit tomorrow."

"I will be pleased to do so," replied Anthony. "You may expect me tomorrow about two hours before noon."

Promising Herminio that he would visit him on the morrow, the young man and his wife started down the long incline of the mountain that led to the village. Standing in the door of the hermitage the seer looked after them longingly and lovingly.

"My son has come," he said, "as I knew he would come; filled with a sense of his seeming virtues, and all unconscious of the awakening which a few short years will bring. It is ever thus. In the initial stages of his higher evolution, man is still unaware of the future. Nature, the kind mother, veils from him the heartaches and the sorrows, which he is to endure, in order that he may transmute his forces and long for liberation. My son has sought knowledge of the physical world. In that he is well versed. But when he longs for knowledge of the spirit and the Invisible forces respond, it will be my privilege to aid him in the hour of his trial."

That evening the central theme of the conversation of Anthony and Regina was the old sage of the mountains. The circumstances under which they had met him—his great age and peculiar character, stamped him as a man of mystery. Heretofore on other occasions, they had regarded other persons whom they met, in an ordinary way; but this old man was, compared with other beings, a paradox and an exception.

"I promised the old man I would pay him another visit," said Anthony, "for he awakened in me an interest I cannot define. While he is affable to an extreme degree, yet he bears a certain degree of dignity that I have never noticed in other men."

"Then by all means see him tomorrow. It will be your last visit, for I overheard you tell the guide that we were to continue our journey the day after tomorrow."

"Yes, that is my intention. We must press on. Two months have now been spent sojourning in these mountains. We have enjoyed the most novel of honeymoons and it is with regret that I see it approaching its end."

The next morning Anthony set out immediately after breakfast, and two hours later reached the hermitage.

"You are early," said Herminio, as he extended his hand in welcome, and offering Anthony a chair bade his guest be seated.

"Rest yourself," he said, "and when you have recovered from your fatigue, we will take some refreshment. It is well that we attend to our physical wants first, so that if we get deep in conversation, our mental faculties can have full play."

Then making ready a small table, the sage brought forth milk, fruit and bread. Anthony ate

with keen relish, the morning walk having sharpened his appetite. After the collation was finished, Herminio cleared the little table, and seating himself beside his guest, thus addressed him:

"If you remember your Homer, and no doubt you do, you will recall to mind that the heroes of the Odyssey, always appeased the rage of hunger before engaging in what they called 'sweet converse.'"

"Yes, it was their custom, and we seem to share in their trait, having done likewise. Do you know that I some times compare myself to the young Telemachus conversing here with Old Laertes."

Herminio smiled.

"There is a law of harmony," he said, "that brings kindred souls together in union. It affects principally individuals who are making the attempt at Unity with the Self. Have you not always been a lover of truth?"

"Yes, all my life, but until recently I sought for truth through those channels that were accepted as current authority. Lately, however, I have made a resolution to lay my mind open to truth, from whatever source it comes."

"You are well on the way to knowledge," said the seer, "when you make such a resolution. When you reach that stage of development you long for knowledge in itself, and not for any material gain that the acquisition of it might bring."

"True," replied Anthony. "My thirst for knowledge has been insatiable; but up to a very recent time I took my draughts from the fountains of Authority. Now I have come to believe that truth can be perceived by the pure soul, as easily as light can be cognized by the physical eye."

"Yes," said the seer, "and I am glad you used the word 'pure,' for according to Heraclitus, 'The pure soul is like a flash of lightning from a cloud,' illumining the dark spaces, making light, where before all was darkness."

Anthony paused. For a time there was silence between the seer and his pupil, and Anthony seemed to sink into a reverie. Finally Herminio touched him lightly on the arm, and looking at him lovingly continued:

"Has not your thirst for knowledge been preceded by a purity of motive?"

"Most assuredly, and it is for that reason that I now begin to see Good in everything. In my boyhood I was much inclined to poetical composition. On a certain occasion after I had meditated a long time on the mystery of Being, there flashed into my consciousness a short poem, to which I gave the title—The River of Life. The figure is old—very old, so I do not claim originality for the conception, but the lines appealed so strongly and I preserved the figure so carefully throughout the three stanzas, that I wish to recite them to you."

"Proceed," said the sage. "I will be pleased to hear you."

For a time Anthony was silent, evidently recalling the lines to memory before he began the recital.

"Have you forgotten any part of it," asked Herminio.

"No, I have it entire. Folding his hands in his lap, Anthony looking into the eyes of Herminio, began the recital:

## THE RIVER OF LIFE.

Oh, the sunbeams are bright  
On The River of Life,  
At its source in the Valley of Time!  
But far down the stream  
The lights faintly gleam,  
As the River flows on to the sea.

Here the banks grow so dark,  
That the swallow and lark,  
On its shores seldom warble their Lays;  
While Hope's searchlight gleam,  
Turns from the dark stream,  
And is lost midst the brambles and braes.

Speed Thee on River bright,  
Greet the sunbeams again,  
Far beyond the dark moorland and lea;  
Each crystal drop's sheen  
Shall mingle I ween,  
In the light of Eternity's sea.

"The poem," said Herminio, "is an expression of your real Self. It is you. By the continual aspiration for the higher things of life, your soul was attuned to receive the truths embodied in the poem, from the world of Eternal Ideas."

"I believe you said yesterday, that the chief aim of the real man, was to get in touch with this world of ideas."

"Yes, but there are very, very few real men in the modern world of today. Now, you are a real man—a progressing soul. I do not say this to flatter you, for I never deceive. The ordinary man engaged

in mundane affairs—in business, politics, and the accumulation of wealth, does not know the alphabet of life. This may seem a hard saying, nevertheless, it is nothing more than the truth. Knowing nothing of the higher reaches of thought, they resort to argument and sophistry to sustain and prove their convictions, thus binding themselves more firmly to the world of sense—the world of shadows.”

“Then where do we find the One Reality?”

“In subjective thought. When you conceived your poem, your consciousness functioned in this subjective world. During those moments you put away the things of sense, and lived in the realm of Ideas. Your thought was vivid and pure. As your aspirations become more intense, you will live more and more in consciousness, and less and less in things.”

“Is there any limit to this expansion of consciousness?”

“No. It is limitless and eternal.”

Anthony bowed his head and was silent for some time, while the sage watched keenly his every movement, and the expression of his features.

“Your last statement,” he said, “seems almost too wonderful for belief.”

“Yes, it may seem so,” replied the sage. “But let us take an illustration from physical nature. You believe in the infinity of space, do you not?”

“Certainly. It is the only conception I can form of it.”

“Very well. You know it to be limitless and boundless. Your mind cannot imagine it to be bound in any direction. It extends in all directions and is in itself an expression of infinity. Now since everything is contained in space, it follows that no object however large can get outside its limits. Space, therefore, is one reality. We can imagine a

time when matter, such as we know it, might possibly have had no existence; but we can by no feat or stretch of fancy, ever imagine a time when space did not exist. Space then, is self-existent. It was never created. Now, be prepared for the great truth I am about to utter: Consciousness likewise is self-existent, for like space, it was never created. As man evolves, his consciousness becomes all embracing, until it touches and includes all the objects in the Cosmos, in its ever widening reach for the distant shores of Infinity."

"Then a time will come," remarked Anthony, "when the consciousness of man will take on the attributes of space, filling every height and every depth, till it contains within its limits the entire universe itself?"

"Yes, and there are Beings even now, who possess this exalted form of consciousness."

"This is a thing most marvellous. So marvellous in fact, that it is, as I said before, almost beyond belief."

"Truly so," replied the seer, as he fixed his blue eyes lovingly on his pupil. "But wonderful as it may seem, it is only the beginning of the marvel. Man is a part of God—an extension of the Divine Consciousness. A ray of light from the inexhaustible source of all light, eternal, self-existent and uncreated. As such, he contains within himself, the germs of all future manifestation, all progress and all achievement. Possessing the potentialities of a God, his ultimate advance is from within. In the earlier stages of his evolution, however, his progress depends on impacts from without. Now these impacts from the physical world, play chiefly through the emotions, awakening man to his relation in the sense world. When finally, he has had

sufficient experience—all that he can absorb and assimilate through his emotional nature, by the contacting of sense objects, the vibrations and impacts from the physical world recur with ever and ever increasing violence, until the tortures become so great he can endure them no longer, and to obtain peace he is forced to retire within himself. When he at last reaches this inner fortress of the soul, and finds it impregnable to assaults from without—when a sweet peace from the realm of spirit rests on him like a benediction and he feels through his expanding consciousness his relation to the universe and to God, it is then that the great miracle occurs.”

“And what is that miracle?” asked Anthony, looking at the sage with tear dimmed eyes.

“I cannot tell you. That is, I am not permitted to tell you now. But at a later time you will know.”

There was silence within the hermitage, broken only by the flapping of the piece of sheep skin, that curtained the little book shelf on the wall. The morning had well advanced and the sun nearing the meridian, flooded the valley with light. Anthony looking pensively out of the small window, saw several wild goats sporting on high ledges of rock which no man would ever attempt to scale. Far above in the blue ether, he beheld two eagles, making with motionless outstretched wings, long graceful sweeps and curves around their rocky eyrie. Were he alone, Anthony would have continued his reverie indefinitely, but suddenly recalling himself he turned and addressed the seer.

“You are,” he said, “to me a mystery. You speak in riddles and in enigmas. Why do you not make your statements direct?”

“Because if I did you would not understand me,” answered the sage, “so it is well that I speak thus.

initiate?



All I can do is to awaken your interest by hints and suggestions, and at the same time point out to you, the paradoxical nature of truth."

"In that you have done well. Your system though new to me, makes a strong appeal. If true, it must be allembracing; and must contain the essentials of all religions and all philosophies."

"Indeed yes," replied the old man. "We have talked of God, of Infinity, of consciousness and of space. Referring to matter, what is your idea as to the divisibility of the elementary substances, according to modern chemistry?"

"The current authorities," replied the young man, "have given us the atom as the smallest particle of matter that can exist in a free state. Very recently, however, they claim to have broken up the atom into electrons and here their case rests."

"Yes. But the electrons can in turn be again subdivided."

"Is there no end to this process of divisibility?"

"No," replied the seer. "The process is endless. We have been speculating on the infinite. Now we are considering the infinitesimal. Before going further I will say that you can no more imagine a limit to the divisibility of matter, than you can think of a boundary to space. Therefore in your present form of consciousness you occupy a position between the Infinite and Infinitesimal, yet having no true conception of either."

"But from what you said before, I gather that as man advances, these mysteries are made clear."

"Yes."

"Then a time will come when he will possess knowledge in the absolute?"

"Most certainly. At present man's knowledge of himself, the world and the universe, is only relative. This is because he functions entirely in the sense world. He seeks to awaken sensations by the things outside of himself. Always fond of novelty, excitement and pleasures, he flits from object to object in vain pursuit of that happiness, which always eludes him. How different the conditions of those noble souls, who having caught a glimpse of that bright reality, so well depicted by Socrates, in his parable of 'The Cave,' have renounced the objects of the shadow world, to experience bliss ineffable in the Realm of Eternal Ideas. The saints and anchorites of the early centuries knew well the conditions that must surround the expanding consciousness, in its reach after the ultimate reality. Hence their flight into the desert, far from the haunts of men. The sands of the Thebaid in Egypt, have sheltered many souls whose aspirations were so pure and high, that they were accorded glimpses of the Beatific Vision even in this life."

"You say," interposed Anthony, "that when man reaches certain high stages of spirituality, he comes into possession of absolute knowledge. Now will you tell me the first marks of spiritual aspiration—the first evidence of the soul's call for knowledge?" Yes that much I can tell you; now the first test that is demanded of the man, who has made this call, is the conquering of the emotions. This, the ordinary man of the world is unable to do. His failure to do it, remands him to the ranks of our common humanity. He is one of that great number of the earth's denizens, who are swayed and controlled by impacts from the physical world playing through the avenues of these same emotions. On the other hand, however, the man who passes this

Herculean test, not only conquers all human emotions, but transmutes them into spiritual forces of enormous power. A few of our greatest poets and philosophers, have stood this test and gained the Divine felicity, while a great number come from the ranks of humbler souls, who, led more by intuition than by intellect, longed for this knowledge of the spirit, and reached the bliss ineffable. I have said that only a few of the greatest poets and philosophers have reached the Divine ecstasy. This is because the domain of intellect, to which they belong, is governed by pride, and pride must first be conquered, before the call for knowledge can be made. Now the humbler souls who live in the realm of the intuition led by humility, are the flower of the race—the Buddhist Monk, the Christian Saint and the Catholic Nun are all illuminated by this light of the spirit. Having conquered the emotions that sway common humanity, they have risen beyond the vibrations of the sense world, and it no longer exercises its tyranny over them.”

“Then the first requisite on the path to knowledge is the conquering of the emotions?”

“Yes, but this task, gigantic as it is, is not alone sufficient. Granting that the aspirant for knowledge, is given the strength to break the physical barriers, that separate him from eternal life, he must nevertheless, witness the bleeding of his own heart, while passing through the fiery ordeal. Having made the call for knowledge, he has been weighed in the balance and not found wanting. Then it is that the Purgatorial fires are lighted, so the dross in his nature may be burned away. On the altar of knowledge, he has made a willing sacrifice of his heart and his emotions. He has invited the trial and it has been put upon him. Alone and

unassisted by any human power, he is now called upon to witness the transmutation of his own emotions, by the fervent heat of the Purgatorial flames. His poor human heart, which has been the seat of these emotions and the link that bound him to the common humanity, is being slowly but surely purified by the fire of suffering. As the blood oozes from it drop by drop, the man writhes in agony, wondering when the torture will end. Gladly would he go back to the sense world—his world of illusions—had he the power to do so, but in this he is prevented, for he has made his choice and must abide by it. Again and again he fixes his thought on the objective world, and blames himself for being so foolish as to leave its confines. Why, Oh why, he asks himself, did I give up my world of illusions? While it is true, I was not perfectly satisfied and happy there, yet I did not suffer the tortures that I now endure. Here I am in a place of torment. I cannot go back to my friends, for the old avenues of human sympathy and hope, have been forever closed, along with the destruction of my emotions. On the other hand, the invisible world offer no consolation either!"

The seer paused, and fixing his gaze on Anthony, noted the expression of his countenance. Under the piercing glance, the young man rose and walking slowly toward the door of the hermitage, looked out into the sunlight. Folding his hands behind him, he remained perfectly motionless for some minutes; then turning abruptly toward Herminio addressed him:

"Is it the fate of every soul," he asked, "who longs for knowledge and spiritual attainment, to have this fearful trial put upon it?"

"Yes, and no. From your conception, no. Above and beyond your present conception, yes."

"Again, your answer is an enigma."

"Yes. But sometime in the future it will be made plain. We shall meet again. In that not far distant future, you will be susceptible to more truth than you are today, so that I will be able to speak to you with greater ease and more freedom than now."

With these words Herminio rose from his seat, and taking the volume of Homer from the little book shelf, turned the leaves carefully until he found the passage for which he was searching.

"Come," he said, "our conversation has been of such a nature that your brain centers are no doubt fatigued. Let us give them a needed rest. In the meantime, I will read to you from my beloved Homer, that chapter from the *Odyssey* entitled: 'The Conversation with Eumaeus.' As he placed the book against his long white beard, the sage reminded Anthony of the patriarchs of Old. With a well modulated Greek accent, he commenced the chapter in which the unfortunate Ulysses relates his adventures to his friend Eumaeus. His ship wreck—his narrow escape from death, and finally his good fortune in being guided to a man like Eumaeus, in whose lodge he is accorded that hospitality for which the ancient Greeks were alone famous, awoke in the mind of Anthony, the memory of his college days. When finally, the old sage finished, the afternoon was nearly gone and the sun was veering toward the horizon.

"It is with regret," said Anthony, "that I must take my final leave. It will be sundown in a few hours, and I promised my wife I would return at that time. I can never, never forget my strange

meeting with you and the effect it will have on my entire future. Knowing you to be something more than an ordinary man, your statements and declarations have sunk deep into my consciousness, and I will always revere the truths you have uttered and hold them too sacred to be repeated to the vulgar and profane."

As Anthony finished, Herminio placed his hand on the head of his pupil, and stroking the curly black locks, smiled in recognition at the compliments paid him. There, in the afternoon sunlight stood master and pupil. The former fully conscious of his great mission; the latter wholly unaware of the bond of union that already held them together stronger than any human tie.

"You must," said Herminio, "take leave of me now, for your wife awaits you. Fain would I keep thee longer, my dear son. But you must return to your Regina, and then to your duties in the world of men. In your life work as professor of Italian literature, you will meet with distinct success, for you are endowed by nature with the special aptitudes that make for a literary career. You have studied much philosophy. Be then like the Stoics of Old—a disciple of Zeno, neither joyous nor sorrowful. So may you go through the world quietly and unobtrusively, regarding all things in the spirit of fearlessness and equanimity."

"I thank you for your advice and encouragement," replied Anthony, "and I will try to preserve a philosophic spirit throughout the years of the future. You say we are to meet again. When and where, and under what circumstances, I do not know, and should I ask, you probably could not tell me now. But I will hold the thought that we are to meet again. So now farewell."

"Farewell, my son," replied Herminio, as he clasped the extended hand and stroked it lovingly for the last time. "Farewell, and may the blessing of God rest on you."

As Anthony crossed the threshold and stepped out into the little inclosure that surrounded the hut, the beams of the afternoon sun shone full on the stately figure of the seer, who stood now alone in the doorway of the hermitage. With his right hand slightly raised above his venerable head as if in silent benediction, he watched with loving eye, his pupil, making the long descent down the incline of the mountain. Ever and anon Anthony turned and looked back at the white figure standing erect in the doorway, until the path leading past some small oaks and boulders hid the hermitage from view.

Anthony had met his Teacher.





## CHAPTER VII.

### The Return.

The cottage in the peaceful vale,  
The jasmine round the door,  
The hill still shelters from the gale,  
The brook still glides before.

—Lord Lytton.

Two weeks later, Anthony and Regina surfeited with travel and Alpine scenery, reached the town of Genoa, where they boarded the steamer and sailed for Messina. The voyage was uneventful. For nearly three months they had travelled continuously, and the only joy they now felt was in the return. As they neared the friendly straits, and the city loomed into view, their hearts beat lighter and a flood of tender memories visibly affected them. With child-like simplicity they gave vent to their emotions, before Alonzo and Anastasia who met them at the pier.

"We have missed you much," said Alonzo, as he clasped the hand of his foster son. "No doubt you will be surprised to know that we are now living in Messina."

"Indeed I am," replied Anthony. "When did you make the change?"

"About a month ago; Anastasia was the first to give me the idea. Then Father Clementi persuaded me. They told me I was getting old—too old they said, to work on the bench repairing shoes, and furthermore it was not necessary in any event since

I was a very wealthy man. So finally I consented. We sold the house in Ali and bought a home here. I think you will like the location we have picked out. Come, I have a carriage waiting.

As they entered the conveyance and were being driven through the streets, the conversation was incessant and never for a moment did the interest seem to flag. When they drew up at the house a half hour later, all the main points of the honeymoon trip had been hurriedly gone over—the glory of the Alps, the skill of the guide in taking them over dangerous peaks and difficult passes, their meeting with Herminio, the sage, and lastly their impatient desire to return again to their old home, in dear old Messina.

"You have travelled far," remarked Alonzo. "I have always been told that when people travel for a long time, the novelty wears off and they find the greatest joy in the return."

"Yes, we have found it so," replied Anthony. "But tell me, is this the place?"

"It is," said Alonzo, and alighting from the carriage they ascended the steps and entered the house. "I think you will find everything to your liking. Now that you are married, we will not have to make any further changes. Here we will live in peace and happiness. Anastasia and myself have not many more years left, so it is fitting that we spend the short time together. Your rooms are on the second floor and from the windows you command a view of the sea and the straits."

Ascending the stairway, they found their quarters as Alonzo had described. Regina remarked that the promontory overlooking the sea, where they had spent so many happy hours of courtship, was plainly visible from the east windows, while a

part of Neptune's Square, where she had set up her flower booth, and where for the first time, she had met her husband, could also be plainly seen. Alonzo, she thought could have selected no better place in all Messina. The situation is ideal, and I will always love it, because it commands a view of places that continually conjure up in the mind so many tender memories of events of the past. How sweet it will be to sit in the east windows awaiting the return and home-coming of my husband, in the late hours of the afternoon, when the evening sun strikes the great Square, the mountain path and the promontory itself, with his golden beams, picturing in magic light the scene of our happy love.

So thought Regina. Was there ever a bride so happy? Love alone, had filled her little Cup of Life with happiness to the brim; and with this great happiness there was now added honor and riches. During their absence on their honeymoon, Alonzo had made his last will and testament, bequeathing to Anthony his immense lemon groves near the environs of the city. By this provision her husband was now a rich man. The revenues which the groves yielded, would now come to him. Among his contemporaries he was the wealthiest young man in all Messina. To this blessing Fate had also contributed honors and learning. To be called to the chair of Italian literature at the age of twenty-five, was no small honor. In a few weeks, on Monday, the Fifth of October, the university would open for the term and welcome students and scholars from all parts of Italy. What a position of trust and confidence! What a testimonial of learning and honor!

At the thought of his future duties and responsibilities, Anthony's heart beat high with pride. For the coming year, the university had enrolled a

greater number of students than at any time since its foundation. This spoke well for its past administration. To be worthy of its past greatness, and to achieve for it in the future, even more enduring renown, now became the task of its present counsellors. As the sessions progressed day by day, it became evident that a new spirit would soon aid in shaping the destinies of the university, and that spirit was none other than the young professor of Italian literature—Anthony Colombo. We pass over in silence the emotions which the young teacher experienced, during the first few days, in the discharge of the duties of his chosen vocation. But it is sufficient to say that they were so indelibly stamped on the tablet of his memory, that thereafter they were never effaced.

As time passed and the novelty of his new position had somewhat worn away, and the work took on more of a daily routine character, he passed many happy hours with his pupils to whom he had become endeared as a companion as well as teacher. He loved his art and his interest in it never seemed to flag. When occasionally worn out with long sustained passages of imagination from Dante, and the novel situations in Boccacio he sought refuge after the classes were dismissed, in the pursuit of natural science and philosophy, or sought solace with his Regina, to whom he returned with the abandon of a boy.

Thus absorbed in duties and the happiness of home life, the time passed all too quickly. Three months had gone by since the return from Switzerland, where pleasure for its own sake, had been left behind and exchanged for the sterner realities of life in the beloved environment of old Messina. Happy as the young professor and his wife might

be, in their love, surrounded by wealth and honor, a condition had come about in their home, to insure and warrant even greater happiness. Regina was soon the mother to be! How the glad news was welcomed in the little Italian household! The good Anastasia remarked that twenty-five years previously she had felt a great joy when the little Anthony came to their home. Anastasia recalled vividly to memory the incidents of that memorable day—a day never to be forgotten.

And now a similar joy awaited her. She who had been so happy twenty-five years ago in the expectation of becoming a foster mother to Anthony, now felt the same emotions at the coming of his child. As to Anthony himself, the element of expectation which had entered his life colored all his thoughts. He was about to become a father. Wonderful responsibility! Sometimes in his deeper musings, he tried to anticipate this emotion and analyze with his philosophic mind its constituent parts; but the problem always eluded him. To be known it must be experienced by the consciousness. And so it is with all the deeper forces of life that play through the emotions. To know them, they must be contacted. We must live in the conditions that the emotions can produce. In no other way can we arrive at any other knowledge of it. In no other way will it reveal its wonderful phenomena to us.

When at length her time was completed, Regina was delivered of a boy. We can imagine the feelings of the young father, standing at the bedside of his beloved wife, holding in his arms, their little son. In the life of husband and wife, sanctified by holy love, is there any hour so supreme, as that which follows after the arrival of the first born?

Can any subsequent joy however great, ever equal in intensity and power, that sublime emotion, which floods the soul of both parents, uniting them by the sacred bond, into an indissoluble, mystical and forever enduring union.

As Anthony gazed lovingly at the tiny form, a train of unutterable thoughts were suggested to him. What would the little One's future be? What latent possibilities were stored up in that infant mind, whose only claim to life, was in the uttering of a piteous cry. Would he, as he approached years of discretion, become a lover of nature, as his father before him? Indeed the young parent so hoped. For to love the things of nature, is to love the things of God, and there is no surer mark of the Divinity within us, than a love for all which the Lord has created.

Lovingly, the young husband replaced his precious charge by the side of the mother; stroking tenderly the light hair on the tiny forehead, he turned to his foster mother and addressed her:

"Anastasia," he said, "what will we name the boy? Has Regina as yet suggested any name?"

"Yes, he shall be called Angelo. It is your wife's wish that he be named after his uncle, so he will be given that name at baptism."

"So be it," replied the young husband. "I like the name very well and Regina's wish in the matter will be law. From today on, my horizon shall widen. Aside from my duties as teacher there will be added the obligation of a parent. I welcome the responsibility, great though it be. It is for my wife and little Angelo that I now live. Every honor, every success and every achievement that comes to me will be laid at their feet. No sacrifice will be too

great to undergo for their love. It will be sweet to live for them.

In this mood of mind, the young husband pursued his round of duties at the university. But the days seemed so long! How happy was he at the glad hour of dismissal, when the irksome work was over and he could go home to his little son.

In thinking what the future held in store for his baby boy, Anthony recalled to mind, that during his first year in Messina, he once met an Astrologer who had given him an outline of the fundamental principles of the science of Astrology. At the time he did not give the subject the attention it deserved. But now it occurred to him with new meaning, and he entertained the thought with pleasure. Thus is it always with parents. Every hopeful thought, every seer-like utterance, that gives to their offspring even a shadow of future greatness in the years to come, is dwelt on with delight and half-conscious expectation.

In the home of Anthony the same conditions prevailed. His household was no exception to this general rule. The friends who came to visit him, admired his son and speculated at length on his propitious future.

On the following Sunday, the child being one week old, preparations were made for his baptism. Late in the afternoon, a little party of three persons, entered the Cathedral and took their places near the baptismal font; Alonzo and Anastasia standing as sponsors. There in the dim light which filtered through the stained glass windows, was the child christened Angelo, according to the wish of his mother.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### The Future Casts Its Shadow.

Never shall souls like these  
Escape the Eumenides,  
The daughters dark of Acheron and Night!  
Unquench'd our torches glare;  
Our scourges in the air  
Send forth prophetic sounds before they smite.  
—The Masque of Pandora.

Four years had now passed since the birth of little Angelo, bringing the young father and philosopher, to his twenty-ninth year. In his chosen life work, Anthony had risen to the heights of success. Possessed of wealth and honor, his fame as teacher had also won for him local distinction. His family life, surrounded and sustained by an ideal love, should have made him the most contented and happiest of men. But during the latter half of this period—the last two years—a burning desire to know more of the world-mystery—the mighty secrets of creation—of life and of death, had slowly but surely taken possession of him. Having sounded deeply human knowledge, he, like the great Newton, compared himself to a child, playing with the shells along the sea coast of knowledge, while the great Ocean of Truth still lay beyond. On many a summer night, while his wife and babe were wrapped in sleep, he would rise from his couch and going out on the balcony direct his gaze to the star groups; those swinging constellations, that since the days

of his childhood, had exercised their strange fascination over him. There he beheld that broad zone of light—the milky way, spanning the heavens in silent splendor, until it was lost to view in the southern confines of Sagittarius. There Polaris, silent sentinel of the heavenly host, still held his shining place, undisturbed and unmoved amid the mighty motions of the Cosmos! There Vega gleamed with bluish ray, from out that crystal pile of diamond light in Lyra, whose circling orbs of flame moved majestically round the Sovereign of the North.

In silent contemplation the young professor would remain for hours with his eyes fixed on the heavens. Here at last was the real world. And yet what assurance had he that it was real? Had not modern astronomy declared the stars to be composed of the same chemical elements that make up our own earth? What charm was there in such discovery? Were not the shining orbs brought down to a terrestrial level? Although the universe was now linked together in a common bond of union, yet was it not a material bond? Of what use to man, was the beauty and complexity of this visible creation, if it had no spiritual value? For surely such researches, instead of inspiring Faith in the human heart, only caused it to doubt the more. "But I will not doubt," soliloquized this earnest searcher after truth. "For me to doubt, would be to die. In faith, and in faith alone, must I find my consolation. There is, and must be, a greater reality underlying all this material manifestation. I will put my trust in the Invisible and in that Invisible realm which is at present beyond me, will a new hope be found!"

Happy man! Thou hast made the call for knowledge, and knowledge will be thine. Many, many times, have the great souls of earth contemplated like thee, on the world's mystery. Alone and unaided by their fellowmen they withdrew from the spirit of the world and lived in the presence of the Divine Light, which burned in the Great Within. Now the secret of power which those Great Ones attained, is never given out to the world, for the world is not worthy to receive it. There is a law that prevents the unworthy from even coming in contact with the truths put forth by the illuminated. Should they, perchance, overhear an occult truth, they would not understand it. Thus the secrets that lead one on and upward to the heights of bliss and knowledge, are by nature herself most carefully guarded. But the conditions that must obtain in the heart of a man, who would have knowledge for its own sake, are above and beyond the reach of common humanity. This condition superhuman as it is, you have already attained. Superhuman knowledge will soon be given you, but you will be called on to pay a superhuman price. Nature balances her accounts accurately and the last tithe must be paid.

Having invoked super-sensuous knowledge, Anthony had now placed himself unconsciously within the range of its influence. In his home life particularly, was this influence first noticed and felt. Among normal women intuition is more keen and accurate than in men. Regina was therefore the first, to notice a change that during the last two years had been gradually coming over her husband. He did not seem to be joyous and happy as of Old. With wealth and honor at his command, with his distinction that he had won as teacher, he should have been the happiest and most care free of men.

But the very reverse now seemed to be the case. When at home with little Angelo on his knee, he seemed to forget the boy and sometimes gave answers which were not in keeping with the questions which the child had asked. It was true that he loved him devotedly; but it was also evident that his love was not impulsive like the mother's. There seemed to be some undercurrent of thought, holding back the natural and careless outbursts of parental feeling. Spontaneity of action seemed to have ceased altogether, and if for a short time, it was aroused by the playfulness of the boy, it was as suddenly discontinued, and Anthony would again sink into a species of reverie. It is a universal law, that all souls who long ardently for knowledge above the human level, begin to lose interest in the things of the material world and even the companionship of their dearest friends and relatives. In this, Anthony was no exception. He had demanded of nature, her hidden secrets. The demand was about to be granted and he must, like all aspirants, come under the law.

It was during this period, in the life of the young professor, when all the forces of his consciousness seemed to focus to a different center. In his deeper meditations and musings, which sometimes lasted far into the small hours of the morning, he had caught glimpses of a great reality, which the pure in heart and the saints of earth, have always regarded as the richest treasure of the soul. This wonderful faculty, so clear in its perception, had proved to its possessor that cognition was possible beyond the sense world. In the formula of Aristotle, which he had so loved to ponder over even as a boy, it was stated that "the world of sense, is a world of shadows, and that if we would know the

true world, we must mount on the wings of Spirit and rise to a purer atmosphere many leagues above our own, where the real world exists, bathed in a light of gold and purple."

This wonderful saying of the Stagarite, was to the newly awakened consciousness of Anthony, now being made clear. Along with this gift of higher cognition, there was manifested a decrease in interest for the things that are contacted through the plane of the mind. The highest form of literary expression, the deepest human knowledge, even human love itself, now held only a secondary place in the consciousness. Throughout all cycles of time it is ever the same. The man who longs for knowledge, has unconsciously called for liberation. Concentrating his thought on the Unseen and the Invisible, he drifts away from the material world and enters the Ocean of Delight. Here no storms of emotion can ever more affect the soul, which has left its old moorings and now quivers on the borderland of Spirit.

Anthony, like other noble souls who had gone on before him, began to feel this inner urge. While he discharged his duties as teacher, and manifested apparently, the same interest as of old, yet in his own mind there was an ever present foreboding, that his connection with the physical world was soon to undergo some radical change. Why he should entertain such an idea, he did not know. After the duties of the day were over and he repaired to his home, the smile of his wife and the playfulness of little Angelo, would for a time master the unwelcome feeling and force it into the background. But when the members of his household including Alonzo and the good Anastasia, had retired for the night and the house was quiet, that

shadow of impending change again came over him. Sleep, that boon of nature, which brings sweet forgetfulness of care and worries of the day, was oft denied him and many times it was well toward the dawn 'ere his troubled eyelids closed in slumber, and even then, the premonitions persisted in dream consciousness.

On one particular night, the young professor having retired somewhat earlier than usual, in order to court and induce the sleep of which he stood in so much need, dreamed a most significant dream. Utterly alone amid the solitudes of nature, he stood at the base of a high mountain. It was a perfect day, and as he gazed upward at the rugged heights, the summit appeared in such clear outline against the blue ether, that he felt impelled to climb toward it. Immediately he commenced the ascent; but on looking down, saw that his feet were bare. To make any progress was a most difficult task, and at times he would lose his foothold and slip back; and only by clutching the dwarf shrubs and weeds that grew in his path, was he able to prevent himself from being dashed to death in the valley below. Why he should continue on his perilous way, he knew not; but some unseen force impelled him ever on. So on, and on he climbed from boulder to boulder and shrub to shrub, until his hands and feet bled so profusely, that the stones on the way were stained with the red drops and he could scarce endure the pain. But he was gaining the goal—onward! onward! What if his feet and hands were bruised and bleeding, was not victory near? What though he suffered the tortures of thirst and the pangs of hunger, was not the impulse Divine that urged him on? So he struggled forward and when

at last with one mighty effort, he reached the summit, a glad cry burst from his lips. There, on the very top of the mountain, he beheld a Greek temple of marvellous beauty, white as the driven snow. Along its side there flowed a stream of crystal water, in which he bathed his bleeding hands and feet. Then suddenly the blood and the bruises disappeared and his whole body was made white as the temple itself. Then approaching the entrance he beheld a marble tablet, on which were engraved these words in Greek characters:

**"The Temple of Knowledge. Know all ye who would enter the precincts of this sacred temple, that your hearts must be bled from impure desire and you must successfully pass the superhuman ordeal, of making 'The Unity With Self.'"**

Then Anthony awoke from his dream and clasped around his neck, felt the arms of little Angelo.





## CHAPTER IX.

### The Destruction of Messina.

None, none shall tell that hour of fearful strife,  
When death must share the consciousness of life;

Away! dread scene! and o'er the harrowing view  
Let night's dim shadows fling their darkest hue.

—Pompeii.

It is early morning of December 28, 1908. The inhabitants of Messina, surfeited with pleasure and worn out with the Christmas festivities are sleeping heavily. In every Sicilian household, the customary Novena, which ends on the vigil of Christmas, has been religiously kept. Thereafter, the spirit of the Holidays took hold on every mind and all classes shared in the common joy. Merriment and song has been the order of the last few days and the happy children of the Faith have shared with relatives and friends, the mirth and conviviality of the festal board. So they sleep on in heavy dreamless sleep, and rest in unconscious and seemingly innocent security.

But hark! What is that low rumble like distant thunder, that breaks the impressive stillness of this dark hour that precedes the dawn? At first almost inaudible, but increasing in volume every second, it chills the heart with terror. Then the ground moves in billows like the sea, and crash follows crash in quick succession, till it seems the earth itself is being split in twain. Only thirty-five

seconds have passed since the first tremor was felt, accompanied by that ominous rumbling sound, and fair Messina is a heap of ruins. Over 90,000 persons have met instant death in Messina alone, to say nothing of Reggio and Calabria. Fires now break out in every direction and a drizzling rain begins to fall. Pinned under the stones and debris the unfortunate victims who have escaped death, utter their agonizing cries. In the dull glare of the flames, the survivors run madly about, gestulating wildly—chattering incoherently. The catastrophe is so great, that it wrecks the small vessel of human reason and they go about like mad men.

The drizzling rain has now changed to a torrential downpour, but the fires do not go out. An odor of burning flesh fills the air, and attracted by the scent, hundreds of famished dogs have come down from the hills and are feasting on the bodies of the dead. Ghouls—human ghouls, are also abroad and in the lurid light and semi-shadows, can be plainly seen despoiling the unhappy victims of their jewelry and ornaments. The remaining few survivors, who have not gone temporarily insane, are praying for the dawn. Will daylight never come? At last the struggling beams of gray that herald the coming morn, filter slowly through the ever-falling drops of rain. Finally the day breaks, and breaks on a scene of desolation, unparalleled in the annals of seismic destruction. So complete is the ruin that whole streets are obliterated by smouldering heaps of stone and debris. The great Square of Neptune is still recognizable, but it too, has shared the common doom. The Cathedral with its priceless art treasures is leveled to the ground. The chalice shaped marble pulpit, lies on its stem—mute testimonial of its past glories. In the apse, the mosaic

figure of the Christ, remains unmoved—standing in the very place, with hand uplifted in benediction, where for five hundred years it has blessed thousands of worshippers from every land and clime.

For full twenty-four hours the city lies prostrate—without communication or help from the outside world. Then word reaches Naples that an earthquake has destroyed a part of Northern Sicily—that is all.

Acting on this information the steamer *Thrapia* of the Lloyd line, sets out for the scene of the disaster. Entering the straits the crew of the vessel find Messina a heap of ruins. The catastrophe becomes known in all its details, and martial law is proclaimed. The wounded are removed to Catania. The dead, as many as can be extricated from beneath the tons of fallen masonry, are buried in trenches, covered with quicklime and rounded over with earth. An iron cross at the head of each trench marks their common graves. This done, the soldiers withdraw and Messina, is no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two days before Christmas, Anthony received a letter from a prominent banker of Naples, urging him to come to that city for a conference, on a matter of great moment. An endowment was offered the university, the conditions of which must be carefully gone over, before its acceptance by the board of regents. This endowment coming from a prominent citizen of Naples, who also held interests in Messina, was gladly welcomed by the faculty, as it would add to the further renown of their beloved seat of learning. Accordingly Anthony left for Naples late on Christmas afternoon. It was not without some misgiving, that he bade good-bye to his foster parents, his wife and little Angelo who

clung to him tearfully, calling to him with sobbing baby voice, to come back—come back, until overcome with emotion, he gave way to his childish grief, by burying his little head in the neck of his mother, who stood timorously on the pier.

It was not until the morning of the twenty-eighth, that Anthony held his first conference with the banker. Another meeting, however, had been arranged for the next day, when all the minor details would be gone over. About five o'clock that afternoon, the news of the earthquake reached Naples. Anthony, in a state of suspense which chilled his very heart, waited in agony for further details and confirmation of the report. Twelve hours later it came. It was terrible beyond belief. Reggio, Villa Saint Giovanni, Calabria and Messina, were a mass of ruins and 200,000 souls had perished.

Psychologists tell us that the human mind cannot at first appreciate a disaster of great magnitude, and especially so is this true, if one is absent from the scene. In his mind's eye, the young professor could not see his loved ones among the dead. They were present on the pier, waving their final farewells to him, as the steamer left the wharf and sailed out into the sea. Little Angelo still called to him to come back—come back. Surely the entreaties of that little angelic soul would not be in vain. They were alive and he would indeed come back to them. Regina had led a good life and her soul was pure as snow! Why should the Lord take his happiness from him? No, they were not among the dead. Although 200,000 souls had perished, his loved ones were not among the number. They lived, they breathed the vital air, and were awaiting him even now. How great would be the joy when he saw them again, and how they would praise and thank

the good Lord for sparing them from the common doom! Although he should be with them, yet he knows he cannot be. Martial law has been declared and none but governmental officials and their aides are allowed within the danger zone. But the soldiers will be kind to them, and will transport them to a place of safety. Even now, as night approaches, he sees little Angelo, kneeling at the feet of his mother, saying his baby prayers, and asking God to bless his papa in far away Naples, or wherever he might be.

Oh Hope, how prone thou art, to lift the soul far up and above the dark realm of reality! In time of great doubt and anxiety, how like a ministering angel art thou ever near, encouraging us with phantom pictures, all glowing in life and color, with the touch of thy magic genius! How with a Seraph's God-given fancy, dost thou infuse with potent art the happy scenes, which though illusive and unreal, still keep us for a time in a state of semi-expectancy, 'ere the flood gates of sorrow are opened and we are overwhelmed by agony and grief.

So Anthony hoped and waited—waited for the steamer, which was to sail on the following day. In his state of mind he thought only of Regina and little Angelo. Conjuring before his mind's eye the scene of reunion, he dwelt on it with such continuity, that no other picture or conception was possible to his fevered brain. One central thought and only one, dominates his consciousness—his wife and little boy—nothing now exists save these two loved ones; the whole world has vanished like a dream; but these two remain. With them to love and care for, his little Cup of Life will still be full. He will face the misfortune of poverty if need be, and face it

gladly, willingly, if only Regina and little Angelo are left to him.


Finally the steamer reaches Messina. What a scene of desolation! The fair city lies prostrate—a heap of ruins—unrecognizable. Marble columns, granite capitals intermixed with tons of debris, block the streets to such an extent that in most cases streets and avenues are wholly obliterated.

The order which at first prohibited anyone but the soldiers from entering the danger zone, has been cancelled and civilians are now permitted to help in the work of recovering bodies from the ruins, but on account of the tremendous difficulties, the rescue work has progressed slowly.

Anthony passes the first cordon of soldiers and entering the area of desolation, his heart sinks within him. He finds the ruin to be far greater than his imagination could have conceived. His loved ones do not meet him. Everywhere he sees only strange civilians and soldiers. As doubt begins to clutch at his heart, he loses his self-control, and under the sway of emotion, hurries here and there among the ruins till he reaches that part of the city where he formerly lived. But no land mark here remains to distinguish what once had been his place of abode. This section of Messina has been literally disembowelled. No buildings remain. They have been ground to powder. One mass of debris from ten to twenty feet deep bears mute witness to the Titanic power of the earthquake. Stunned with the consciousness of his probable loss, Anthony reels around the ruins like a drunken man. Nobody knows or cares anything about him. Only a few days ago, he was a famous young teacher in the historic city, a husband, a father and a man of wealth. Now, he is none of these. The cataclysm

of nature, in its diabolical fury has stripped him of all these attributes and made him poor indeed. For a whole week he wanders around the ruins, searching for his loved ones, but no one has seen any woman or boy answering that description. Furthermore, nobody knows Anthony Colombo. He is an unknown entity. A short time ago he was honored as a citizen and scholar of Messina. Today he stumbles around her ruins, an imbecile and pauper! Sad it is to note the direful effect, when some sudden stroke of misfortune shatters the human reason. How the pallid face betrays in every line the sufferings of the heart—that poor human heart with its myriad emotions, now torturing the man! Is God a just God, who by His Providence allows such a sudden affliction to fall on his children through a capricious convulsion of nature? If he loves his children, as a father loves his offspring, then surely His mercy has not been brought into play? If He is Infinite, he must have foreknowledge and should have spared his children from a cataclysm which it was in His power to prevent? Thus thought Anthony, and thus the despairing thoughts followed one another through his fevered brain. In his delirium, at the close of another day's fruitless search in the ruins, he approached a soldier and telling him his name, asked him if he knew, or had heard anything of his family?

"I have not heard of them," replied the soldier haughtily, "so they must no doubt be among the dead."



"You are very short in your statement," replied the unhappy Anthony, "and you seem to mock my grief."

"Were you a woman, I might give you my sympathy," said the soldier, "but you are a man and must bear your loss. Do you think you are the only one who has lost relatives and possessions? No. You are only one among thousands."

After delivering himself of this sympathetic message, the soldier strolled away and left Anthony seated in the ruins, with his face buried in his hands.


For a long time Anthony remained motionless. The full consciousness of his appalling loss had at length dawned upon him. Regina and little Angelo were gone from the world forever! Oh, bitter anguish of heart! He must go on alone through that cold cheerless world, that had now become a wilderness indeed. Slowly he arose, and leaving the scene of desolation, walked toward the hills, to the West of the ruined city. It was evening. The sun had set and the short twilight had deepened into night when Anthony reached the first ledge of limestone, and began the ascent up the cliff. In a semi-dazed condition, he walked along until he reached a stone seat which overlooked the straits. Unconsciously he had reached the promontory which held the sacred memories of his love. Why had fate brought him to this hallowed spot as if in mockery? With a groan he threw himself on the seat and buried his face in his hands. Then the moon rose and as her silvery beams lighted up the face of the cliff, the figure of a man stood out in bold outline against the white limestone. Motionless and mute, the figure leans forward with the face buried in its hands. The evening passes and midnight approaches. The moon has reached the zenith and still the mysterious



figure remains seated on the promontory, as if carved from the stone itself.

Oh favored of men! You know not in this, your hour of agony, of the great joy that in the future awaits you! At present you are under control of the emotions of the poor human heart, but these you will in time transmute. Then you will thank God for his Providence. You will be given to eat of the Tree of Life, and be invited to share in the joy of your Lord.

Anthony had made the call for knowledge, and the Invisible Powers of the universe, which had so long guarded over his destiny, began to respond.





## CHAPTER X.

### Chaos.

Have pity on the eyes morose  
Wherein the soul its hope reveals;  
On fated things that n'er unclose,  
And all who wait what night conceals.

—Intuitions, Materlinck.

It was well toward morning when Anthony left the promontory, and mechanically made his way to the westward. Occasionally he would turn and look back in the direction of that scene of desolation, which had now become the graveyard of his hopes. With unsteady steps he stalked along his unmarked way, thick with underbrush and vegetation. For three days he had not tasted food, and weakened by hunger, as well as grief, he goes on and on, not knowing even the direction in which he is journeying. Deep sorrow has made him unresponsive to everything around him. An automaton in the hand of Fate, he obeys impulses not his own. Sometimes he stops in his erratic walk, and pulling a piece of bark from off a nearby tree, he takes it between his fingers and sinking his nails into the soft pulp, he breaks it up into tiny pieces and casts them from him. Then tearing off another piece from the tree, he repeats the process, all the while staring into vacancy with bloodshot eyes. Toward noon a covey of quails rose suddenly from a thicket, near which he passed, uttering their shrill piercing cries; they flew away only a few feet in advance of him. Yet

he neither saw nor heard them. All afternoon he trudged along, utterly oblivious of his surroundings. Bereft of reason, he wanders through the woods as though a wilderness had claimed him and he had despaired of ever meeting a human being again.

Toward sundown he paused, and seating himself on the gnarled roots of an oak tree, again buried his face in his hands. It was not because day had reached its close, that he stopped in his wandering course, for he had lost all cognizance of time, and had become totally oblivious of the passing of the hours. Morning, noon and night, are alike to him. He has lost all sense of perception, and can make no distinction between things. For the time being, all normal processes are interrupted. Having lost all that he loved in the physical, and being unable as yet, to project any hopeful thought into the future, his mind dwells as it were in chaos; and if memory momentarily returns, it comes but to burn and torture him. Living in this state of negation, shattered in mind and spirit, he has become in reality, naught but a grim spectre of the past. For some time he remained in the same position, with his face buried in his hands. Then overcome by bodily fatigue and hunger, he fell on his side, and slept the broken sleep, known only to the captive and the condemned. At times he would rouse from his fitful slumber, and mechanically pull at his coat, as if he would bind it more tightly around him, for the night was cold. Far above him, in the blue ether, the Winter stars shining with a pure spirit-like brightness, held on their appointed courses, while the familiar constellations thick with star dust, moved with stately procession, in ever narrowing circles round the Pole. But their splendor only mocked him, and covering his eyes with his hands,

he shut them out from his vision and groaned aloud. Thus the night passed—a night of the most acute anguish, agony and suffering.


As morning dawned he arose, and again set out on his way. It was his fourth day without food, and in spite of his mental sufferings, nature compelled him to heed her physical demands. He must have nourishment or perish. Seeing a small house which he took for the home of a shepherd in this desolate region, he made toward it. As he neared the place a man appeared. He was old and decrepit and bent with years. Addressing Anthony he asked him if he was a refugee from Messina?

Anthony answered in the affirmative, but that was all. Seeing his weakened condition, the old man brought him into his hut and set food before him. Then assigning him to a small room, he bade him lie down on a rudely constructed couch. Then assuring him he would return at sundown, he withdrew, leaving him alone.

Strengthened and revived by the food he had taken, Anthony fell into a quiet slumber and slept on until very late in the afternoon. When he awoke it was near sundown and hearing footsteps approaching, he knew that his host had returned. Then the old man came into the room and finding Anthony seated on the edge of his rude bed, he assumed a sad smile which was well in keeping with his dark swarthy visage.

"You are better than you were this morning, are you not?" he asked. "Food and rest are good medicines, and when I brought you here I knew it was that you needed most."

"Yes," replied Anthony. "I was very weak. I am a little better now; but my sorrow is deep, for I have lost my family and all my possessions."



"I am sorry for you," said the old man, "but at this particular time, such cases are common. Have you any relatives left at all?"

"No. No relatives at all. They have all perished."

"What did you do in Messina?"

"I was a teacher in the university."

"Was your property also destroyed?"

"Yes, my home was razed to the ground, and my lemon groves near the city were irretrievably ruined. But the most cruel blow that Fate inflicted on me, was the death of my beloved wife and baby boy. Even now, I see them as they stood on the pier, on the memorable Christmas afternoon when I boarded the steamer for Naples. Little Angelo, held out his tiny hands and with appealing baby voice called to me to come back—come back. Oh why did I not heed his infant cry and return. Had I done so, I would have shared the common doom, and died with them. But cruel Fate divided us and left me here to suffer on alone. To me the world is now a wilderness, through which I am condemned to go with sad and heavy heart." And throwing himself on his couch, the young man sobbed convulsively.

"Come," said the old shepherd, as he raised him by the arm. "You must not give way to your grief in this way. Do you not believe in Christ and the Holy Church He has established?"

"Yes," replied Anthony, "I was brought up in the Faith."

"Then you know, it is counted a sin to grieve too much. For when we do so, we question the Providence of God."

"Yes, that is true," replied Anthony, "but my sorrow is so great that I am consumed by it."

"Listen," said the old man, "I, too, have a sorrow—sorrow for a crime which I committed in my youth. In that respect the sorrow is somewhat different but the memory of it burns just the same."

"Were you pardoned for the crime?"

"Yes, but not for a long time afterward. It happened in this way. When a youth, I joined an Italian banditti, which operated principally in the mountain districts of Sicily. Their main object was robbery, but they did not fail to commit murder, when their business required it. Nothing was sacred to them; and their vandal hands often despoiled churches and altars of their sacred objects and ornaments. One day I stole away from the band, thinking I would win honors for myself by committing a depredation alone and unassisted. Going some miles from my companions, I hid myself in the thick underbrush that lines the road near Taormina, and waited for nightfall. When the darkness came on, I listened intently and watched the road with anxious eye, to see if a traveller was approaching. Finally my vigil was awarded by the figure of a man coming up the road. In the moonlight I saw him distinctly. How I hoped a passing cloud would hide the face of the moon, so that my nefarious work could be done in greater security. Suddenly my wish was granted. A few minutes before the stranger was opposite me, a heavy cloud sailed over the moon, so that when my victim passed me, the road was dark. Instantly I sprang out, and striking him on the head with a bludgeon, he fell heavily to the ground. Going through his clothing I found twelve pieces of gold, and was about to make my escape when I saw he was regaining consciousness. Fearful of being discovered and my crime found out, I siezed my stiletto and was about

to plunge it into his heart, when his eyes opened and fixing his gaze on me, he pleaded with me to spare his life. "You can have the gold," he said, "I will tell no one, only spare my life."

"Go," I said, "I spare you. Then I left him and he ran away up the road."

The next day I buried the gold, marking well the spot where I buried it. But I did not go back to rejoin my companions. For the first time in my life remorse took hold on me, and my conscience smote me, for what I had done. The priest to whom I confessed my crime, shortly afterward, did not absolve me. He said I must first make restitution before I could ask for forgiveness. Years passed. One night there came to this very hut a traveller who asked shelter for the night. I took him in. Before retiring we talked for some hours. He was very communicative, and friendly. In the course of his conversation he mentioned the banditti. Then he told me he was robbed one night on the lonely road leading to Taormina, and relieved of twelve pieces of gold. But at the last, he said the robber was considerate, for he spared his life, even after he had raised his stiletto to take it.

Trembling with the consciousness of guilt, and knowing him to be the man I had robbed, from his knowledge of the crime, I asked him to excuse me a few moments while I went out into the yard. I told him I heard a noise in the sheepfold, and thought that something was annoying the sheep. Then going out into the yard, I hastily dug up a little iron pot which contained the gold and brought it into the hut. Here is your gold, I said, as I counted out the shining pieces and laid them before him. I am the man who robbed you. If you forgive me and take the money, I will have made restitution,



and God will then pardon me also, and my soul will rest in peace.

The man looked at me in wonder and amazement. Surely, he said, you are the man who struck me from ambush on that memorable night; for you know all the details of the crime, and here is the gold as further proof. But you have given up your sinful life, and the grace of God has touched your heart. So I forgive you freely; for I can do nothing else. But I will not take the gold. I give it to you. It is yours.

"The next morning he went away. I put the gold pieces back in the little iron pot and hid it under the roots of that gnarled oak tree which you can see here from the window. That was thirty years ago. In the confessional I was absolved from my sin. Having been forgiven by both God and man, I should have been at peace, but somehow I never felt perfect peace, for every time I think of my past life, I suffer from remorse."

Had Anthony been in his normal mental condition, he would have explained to the penitent, that he was suffering from the temporal punishment due his sin, and that in time it would pass away. But shadowed as he was in mind and broken in spirit, he heard the story of the old shepherd with only apparent interest. Throwing himself back on his rudely constructed couch, he moaned incessantly and asked to be left alone in his sorrow.

Obligingly the old man withdrew, and Anthony passed another restless night in a fever of delirium. Tossing from side to side of his bed, his fitful sleep was interrupted by horrid dreams and nightmares. At times he clenched his hands so tightly, that the nails sank into the palms and drops of blood oozed


through his closed fingers and stained the bedclothes. In the morning the shepherd came into his room and waking him, bade him take some nourishment.

"You will come with me today," he said, "and help me herd the sheep. If I leave you alone, you will lose your mind entirely. Already you have tortured yourself; for the palms of your hands have bled, and the bedclothes are stained. Dress, I tell you, and come on with me. The air and change of scene will help you."

Half-heartedly Anthony rose, and dressed himself as if in a swoon. Then following the shepherd out of the hut, the two men walked through the thick fog that hung like a pall over the landscape, until they reached the place of pasturage. Although it was the winter season, the scattered herbage which grew sparingly here and there among the rocks, afforded in a measure, some sustenance for the sheep. Seating themselves on a rock under a tree, they watched them crop the short grass and gambol over the stony ground. Thereafter every morning at the same hour, they left the hut together with the sheep bounding before them, and made for the place of pasturage. The old shepherd was very reminiscent and related long stories of his life and experiences to the sorrowful Anthony. Apparently, he listened to the stories of the shepherd, but had he been asked to repeat the main points of a narrative immediately after hearing it, he would have failed. Controlled by one dominating thought—the loss of his wife and little son, his memory is impaired and he lives in a state of blank negation. Everything is Chaos. There is no Creator; for harmony and order do not exist in the world. There can be no God; for the innocent suffer with the guilty, and the saint dies untimely with the sinner.

No age or condition is spared; for in the twinkling of an eye, all alike have shared the common doom. If God exists and His mercy endureth forever, if He be the "Mirror of Justice," the "Seat of Wisdom" and the "Cause of Our Joy," then surely His justice must be tempered with mercy, for He should show love for his children. But when cataclysm and fire, seemingly originate in the bowels of hell itself, and burst on the world in demoniacal fury, claiming the innocent babe with the decrepit gray-haired man, there is no order in the Cosmos, for Chaos rules supreme. Oh Life, thou art indeed a fearful gift; for we know not the moment, when capricious Chance will hurl us from happiness and security, to misery and danger, from hope to despair, from wealth to poverty; aye, from life to death.

To Anthony, living in the first stages of the Great Awakening, Chaos is become the order. It is the one reality. In that he lives and moves and has his being. He knows no other world. A Titanic and capricious force called Nature, rules the universe of things. The pigmy man, swept along by this mighty power like chaff before the gale, is powerless to direct his course, but becomes the sport, as it were, of contending winds that waft him to destruction. In his own case, was this not too true? Was he not only a short time before, prosperous and happy? What had he done to merit this awful visitation? Had he not been always upright and honest; likewise chaste and virtuous, to an extreme degree? Had he not been a loyal child of the Faith, a loving husband and father, discharging his obligations with scrupulous exactitude? What man could accuse him of shortcomings in this regard? If his life then, had been ideal and just before the Lord,



why was he given this Cup of Sorrow to drink in agony and tears?

But no. Beneficent Providence does not rule the world and the Cosmos. The skeptics and the unbelievers, the freethinkers and the atheists, have proved their case at last. There is no heaven, but there is a hell that is manifest on every hand. This hell is in every human heart, and instantly begins to torture the man, the moment that capricious thing called Nature, takes from him something on which he has set his affections. How foolish is man to cultivate emotions that cause him only sorrow! How much happier is the proud scientist and philosopher, who denying the existence of God and the soul, bow down before this all-powerful Nature and her inexorable decrees? How foolish the cry of the Psalmist, who addressing God, says:

"What is man that Thou are mindful of him?"  
"Does not bitter experience prove that no such power is ever mindful of us? No. There is no such thing as a Divine Providence ruling the world and the affairs of men. Coming into consciousness through some blind force, inherent in matter, we live our little day and suffer a thousand hours of pain, to one of pleasure. Afar off the Fates and Furies watch our feeble efforts in ghoulish glee, and mock us with their hollow laughter. Instead of establishing peace on the earth and good will among men, we sow seeds of strife and discord, until hatred takes the place of love and millions of men march forth to gory battlefields to please the god of war. Verily the world is Chaos, and the heart of man lives in it. From the dawn of time even until now, it was ever so. The apostles of pessimism and despair, have indeed voiced the truth. In the economy of nature, there is no such thing as mercy

and justice is a stone. Come, Oh Sorrow, and consume me. Thou art my heritage. Into thy dark bosom Oh, Chaos, I return from whence I came. Engulfed in thy black shadow, I am again one with Thee. Oh, Chaos! Chaos! Chaos!



## CHAPTER XI.

### Despair.

We are the fools of time and terror. Days  
Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,  
Loathing our life and dreading still to die.

—Byron.

Six months have passed since Anthony came to the home of the shepherd. In the hut of the recluse, he has found a refuge and asylum, he would have sought for in vain elsewhere. Under the constant care of the old man, he has become as a child, obeying implicitly his every request. Each morning shortly after sunrise, they have gone forth together with the sheep bounding before them, to the place of pasturage. The hot July sun smites so fiercely with its rays, that for the greater part of the day, they seek shelter from the heat, under the spreading branches of an oak tree. The old shepherd has been very watchful of his charge, and has begun to note a slight change in the mental condition of his patient. The chaotic state of mind, in which the young man has been plunged, is at times momentarily broken; and although his mind wanders and he is still unable to concentrate his thoughts, yet a shadow is seen to occasionally cross his features, portraying a conflict of emotions going on within. This sign, the old man has taken as ominous of change. For hours together, they have sat in silence, watching the sheep crop the short grass in the

summer sun. Then to relieve the monotony of the situation, the old man would recount some exploit of his youth, to which Anthony would apparently listen with attention. But his thoughts were far away. He would contrast his past life with his present condition and draw pictures of his happy past, when he lived in Messina with his wife and little Angelo. Then the world was his! Riches, honor and love strewn the pathway of his life. When he entered the class room in the morning, a hum of approbation would rise from the assembled students, acknowledging the respect and confidence in which they held their instructor. Highly esteemed by the faculty, for the honor he shed on the university by his intellectual gifts, he had also risen by a series of successes to a high place in the esteem of the leading men of Messina. Now all this was changed. The happiness, the success, the prestige, the honor, has gone out of his life forever. Condemned to a life of isolation and solitude, with an unlettered man of the hills, he has become humbled in the dust. The rude hut in which he lives is naught but a covering from the air. It contains no books or pictures. With the simplicity of a child, he goes forth each morning into the hills with this uncouth old man, who was at one time in his life a criminal and thief! Oh, how hath the proud fallen from their high estate! Never in his wildest dreams could he have foreseen such a change. As his mind slowly emerges from its chaotic condition, he begins to compare the past with the present, and seeks to find a reason for the misfortune that has befallen him. Slowly the thought processes give a slight promise of return to normal conditions. Chaos does not rule supreme. There are moments when the consciousness becomes alert and active, and at such



times he dwells on the phenomena without emotional feeling and holds it before his mind's eye in the light of cold reason. He is no different from the rest of humanity. The great stream of human souls that have visited the earth since the beginning of time, have passed out into the shadow. Each individual soul has had its trials and sorrows. They have endured many agonies in bitter silence, unable to express to other souls, their hopelessness and despair. Never before had he identified himself with the whole of humanity in this way. He had always considered himself as apart from it—as a something separate from the general mass. Has he been brought down to this low level, to this despicable condition to be made to realize his relation to it? In the past, during his prosperity, did he ever give any thought to the poor and the unfortunate—the ignorant and the despised? While it is true that he gave alms to the needy; did he do so in the spirit of true charity, or did he act from the custom of the world and its conventions? Those who were less fortunate than himself, he had helped in this way, but had he ever seriously considered them in his thought? Had he ever felt his relation to this great common humanity that lived in abject poverty, in the slough of despond?

In looking over his past life, his ambitions and desires seemed to march themselves and passed in procession before his vision as if in a mirror. They stood apart from him, and were not a part of him as they had been hitherto. In despair he closed his eyes and holding his head in his hands, sought to shut out the unwelcome pictures that presented themselves successively before him. Although they now seemed like ghosts and phantoms of the past, yet among these phantoms he had lived his vain life,

and had even cherished them as ideals and realities. His personality had been bound up with them. Now in his hour of sorrow and despair, he had learned that his personality was not himself. The real man was not the personality. The individual, the real Self, having become disentangled and unattached from its former center in the physical life, asserted its consciousness and power as an independent entity. Having broken the fetters that bound it to the world of illusion, it demanded recognition from the soul of the man.

Unable as yet, to live in the higher consciousness, Anthony is bowed in the dust. Emerging from the state of Chaos, he would again gladly ally himself with the forces of the physical world. But the main springs and support of that world have been by cruel fate, suddenly taken from him, and he cannot return to it under the same conditions as of Old. Although the dead past has buried its dead, Anthony continues to live in that past. Its pictures and memories appeal to him with such subtle power that he is drawn insensibly into the region of desire. Here he suffers from "the abomination of desolation," for all the world is laid desolate. Day after day he has gone forth with the old shepherd, only to despair over his wretched condition. He returns at night-fall to the shepherd's hut in the same poverty of spirit, with which he went forth in the morning. Is this state of mind to last indefinitely? Assuredly not. Yet if he despairs in Gethsemane, how will he be able to face the Cross on Calvary?

Torn by conflicting emotions, Anthony lives in despair. Unable like Job, to bless God in his misery,

he sees in Him the Author of his misfortune. Living in this terrible state he has become a victim of the delirium of the lower consciousness. There can be no hope; for that on which his happiness was founded, has been swept into oblivion. He can never again attach himself to it, for it exists no more.

Fully realizing his condition, he wonders what the end will be. Sometimes in his delirium, he imagines himself back in the happy past, in the presence of his beloved wife, listening to the childish prattle of little Angelo. At such times his face lights up with joy, and the old shepherd smiles and thanks God that he has given his charge a brief respite from his sufferings, if only through an illusion.

But this quickly passes; and once more Anthony finds himself in the cold world of reality. A world in which there is no incentive in the present and no hope in the future. Weighted down by this awful condition, courage and faith find no place in the consciousness. The day brings no promise and the night no rest. The monotony of despair has taken possession of the soul and holds it captive. In this darkness, the captive soul lives, enmeshed in the thick veils of matter. How long it will endure in this state the Higher Powers alone know. The time of captivity varies with the age of each individual soul. But not until the last vestige of earthly dross has been burned away, will the light from spirit shine. Then, and not till then, will the time of its captivity end, and the door of its prison be thrown open. Into this nether darkness it is the fate of every soul to descend for a time. There it

must be made fit for the light of spirit to illumine its darkened chambers—there it must repose till the Infinite Light awakens it into consciousness by its sacred ray.

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Dark Night of the Soul.

Angel of God! thy finer sense perceives  
Celestial and perpetual harmonies,

\* \* \* \* \*

Cecelia's organ sounding in the seas  
And tongues of prophets speaking in the leaves.  
But I hear only discord and despair,  
And whispers as of demons in the air.

—The Golden Legend.

Among the precious legacies which Saint John of The Cross, Christian mystic and philosopher, left to the world, was the famous treatise to which he gave the title: "The Dark Night of the Soul." In this celebrated work, this sacred writer, describes at great length, the unhappy condition through which the soul must pass and the ordeals of purification that must be endured, before it is made worthy to receive the light of the spirit. If the soul successfully passes through the "Dark Night," the final stages of its Purgatory have been gone through, and it is made fit to function in the realm of pure spirit. For the first time in its long existence, the soul leaves the twilight and shadows of the material world and enters into the light of the spiritual. Here doubt no longer assails it. The crafty powers of the lower world are unable to stay its further progress toward Divinity. Having passed the final ordeals, it realizes its relation to the Infinite, and experiences through this mystical

union, the coming joy of its Lord.

Into this mysterious realm of the "Dark Night," was the soul of Anthony now plunged. Almost a year had passed since the destruction of Messina, and the passage of time had apparently in no way mitigated his sufferings. The winter season had come. A light snow had fallen and covered the fields and the hut of the shepherd. In the home of the recluse the two men had been in earnest conversation for some hours. The old man had been exhorting his charge to give up his despairing thoughts and place his hope in the future. Seeing that his efforts were unavailing, and that he made no impression on the young man, he finally became impatient and addressed him vehemently.

"Anthony," he exclaimed, "do you remember the mental condition you were in when you came to this hermitage?"

"Yes," replied the sufferer, "I was in a most miserable plight. Driven almost insane by my irretrievable loss, I had wandered for days in the wilderness, until hunger compelled me to come to your lodge and ask for nourishment."

"And did I not welcome you, as a father would have welcomed his own child, and bid you stay under my humble roof, until your wounds were healed?"

"Yes, you did that," rejoined Anthony; "you treated me as if I were your own flesh and blood and every time I think of it, the tears of gratitude spring to my eyes."

"It is for that same reason that you should put more trust in my counsels," replied the shepherd. "I know this condition in which you now find yourself, is not always to last. You do your wife and son no good by grieving after them; but you are doing a positive injury to yourself. Not only that;

but despair in itself is a sin. I did not expect you to get over your sorrow in a week or even a month, but a year has passed since you came here and you show scarcely any sign of improvement."

"Do I not show a good spirit?" replied the wretched Anthony, as he crossed his hands over his knees and gazed vacantly into space.

"No, you do not," harshly interposed the shepherd. "You do not even try to throw a little courage into yourself. God in his wisdom has taken your loved ones from you, and put you in poverty of spirit for some cause; which I know not, but there is a purpose in it all. But as you do not conform your life to his Holy Will, you reject His Providence, and that is the cause of your suffering."

"Perhaps so. But since the day Messina was destroyed, my life is a blank. Even should I recover my health and normal spirits, I can see no object in living."

"You give the lie to the Faith that you claim to believe in," said the old man. "Holy Church has always taught resignation to the Will of God. In your prosperity you believed in this tenet of the Faith. In the past God had willed you happiness, honor and riches. Although they are the baubles that the foolish seize, they formed the background of your life. From your seemingly secure position, you regarded the world with complacency. But in an instant, God, the Almighty, saw fit to stage your life amid different scenes. He reversed the order of His Providence, and instead of riches and happiness He willed you poverty and affliction. Oh, it is sweet to bask in the sunlight of worldly prosperity, and from our high place, look with equanimity on the sufferings of our brothers in the world and like the Pharisee thank God that we are not

like other men! This catastrophe has brought you to your knees, and made you realize even against your will, your relation to the vilest man that lives. A short year ago you were an honored instructor in the classics. Would you at that time, have regarded me as an equal and sought my society? Certainly not. Yet today you are glad to find an asylum under my humble roof; and it would be with regret that you would leave my hut even if I told you to go. I defy you to contradict what I have said. You know it is the truth;" and advancing until he was directly opposite his charge, he shook his bony finger menacingly in the face of the despairing sufferer.

Anthony winced and bowed his head in shame. To his disordered vision the figure of the old man became huge—monolithic. In the dim light of the tallow candle, he seemed like an evil spirit of Cyclopean proportions, coming from the depths of hell itself, to accuse him of his shortcomings in the past.

"I am your Evil genius," shrieked the voice of the shepherd. "The Nemesis of your destiny at last confronts you in this, the hour of your greatest anguish, and in mocking glee, lays bare the coverings of your artificial life. At last your proud spirit has been humbled in the dust. The Cross—the sign of your redemption, is now laid across your shoulders. Have you the strength to carry it?"

Receiving no answer from the terror-stricken Anthony, the shepherd continued:

"In the past, life to you was all sunshine, and you could not see the coming sorrows that lurked in the shadows. Now that the sun of your happiness has set and the glare of its light is gone, the events of your life will group themselves in your memory, to burn and torture you, as long as you sit in the



shadow. Now the sun of that day has forever set. You long for it to reappear, but it will never rise. Now there is another sun, more glorious than the first, ever ready to cheer you with its lucid rays, the moment you are able to regard these treasured memories as the ghostly tissues of a dream. It is for you to rise from your present despairing state and accepting the Cross which the Lord has given you, carry it with patience and fortitude. You will find it harder to live your Faith, than to merely believe in it. But it is in the doing and not in the mere believing that virtue lies. I can tell you no more. The finger of the Lord has touched you. His Grace is sufficient to bring you out of your trouble if you will but co-operate with it. But the effort and the determination to do this, remains with you alone."

At these last words of the shepherd, Anthony fell into a swoon. When he regained consciousness, he found himself alone. The candle having burned itself out, he groped his way in the darkness to his room, and throwing himself on his wretched bed, again gave way to despair. But his thoughts now took a different turn. He recalled the events of his boyhood in the little village of Ali. In that far off time of innocence, the scenes of his youth marshalled themselves, and seemed to pass in mute procession before his mental vision. He remembered vividly the humble character of the Sicilians, who banding themselves in groups of four and five, went from house to house during the evenings of Holy Week, singing in a minor key of the agony and sufferings of Jesus. Rude and unlettered as were these men of the Lamenti, for so they were called, yet they were pure in heart and bore their poverty with a heroic patience that must have had its origin in

heaven itself. They had also had crosses and afflictions. Death had robbed them of their loved ones. Disasters had overtaken them; yet they had lived through it all and blessed God besides. Surely in the simplicity of their lives, they exemplified the Beatitudes. They were more Christian than he.

Tossing himself from side to side of his wretched cot, he continued to call up pictures of that far off past. Before his mental vision there appeared now a character more unique than all the rest. Antoine Alepazzi, a friend of his youth, had the misfortune while working in the sulphur mines, to lose his right leg. It was amputated at the knee.. Anthony remembered that when the unfortunate man lay on his bed of suffering he had made him frequent visits to encourage and console him. But Antoine seemed to have had only one wish, and that gave him the greatest concern. He hoped his leg would be sufficiently healed, so that when the Holy season of Lent set in, he would be able as had been his custom, for years previous, to light the great lantern at the foot of the wooden Cross, that stood on the stony hill called the Calvary, just North of Ali. His prayers were answered, and Anthony recalled the gleam of joy that lit up his features, when the physician told him that his leg would be healed in time for him to attend to this customary duty. Thereafter on every Friday night during that season of Lent, when the gleam of the lantern lighted up the figure of the Cross, Anthony had thought of Antoine and his simple wish. He seemed to have one idea that overshadowed all others—he lived to light the lantern at the foot of the Cross—that was all.

Such faith, simple though it was, was withal most heroic. But where was his faith now? Having always lived in the sunshine of life, he had not the

courage to face the future which seemed so dark and uncertain. Tossing on his bed of pain, he suffered all the tortures of despair. In the small hours of the morning he fell into a troubled sleep, awaking at intervals to find the crafty Powers of darkness clutching at his very soul. Condemning himself for his idle life, and feeling keenly a sense of unworthiness, he must now live over, forever and ever the events of the past. The future for him did not exist, for there was no hope. In this miserable plight, he wished that the day would never dawn. Of what use was the light of the sun and the splendor of day, which came only to mock him? Was it not more fitting for eternal night to engulf the soul, which had learned to love the darkness? Wrapped in her friendly pall he would be at least alone. Shielded by her black mantle, he would be secure from prying eyes and accusing voices, and could all the better endure his sufferings, in the bitter silence of isolation.

But finally the dawn broke, bringing with it the unwelcome day. Anthony rose and going into the next room, found that the shepherd had already gone. Glad to be alone with his despairing thoughts, he commenced to pace the floor nervously. On the rude table, the old man had left some boiled rice and honey. But as Anthony would sometimes go for days without nourishment, he did not notice the food. At noon the shepherd returned, ate his simple dinner and again left the hut, without saying a word to the sufferer.

Anthony was at a loss to account for this strange conduct on the part of his benefactor. In secret he had longed to be alone with his gloomy forebodings. Without making a verbal demand, his wish had been granted, yet his sufferings became keener than ever.

For almost a week complete silence had been observed, no words having been exchanged between the two men. At length on the seventh day, the shepherd broke the silence, by asking Anthony to accompany him to the place of pasturage.

"Come," he said, "I have news for you. A stranger passed through the field yesterday and gave me this little book, saying I might find something therein to comfort my soul, but as I cannot read, I give it to you. Perhaps it contains some message that will redound to your benefit."

So saying the shepherd drew from the inside of his coat, a small book bound in padded leather and laid it on the table.

Taking up the little volume, Anthony found it to be, "The Imitation of Christ," by Thomas à Kempis. Years before he had been familiar with this treasury of the Christian faith, and as he read the title page, the old man imagined he saw the joy of recognition light up his troubled features. Turning the leaves at random, his eye fell on the following passages:

*"What every man truly is, is best shown by occasion of adversity: For occasions make not a man fail, but they show what the man is."*

And again:

*"He that overcometh, saith our Lord, I shall give him to eat of the Tree of Life."*

And again:

*"He that withdraweth himself from friends and known men, God shall come nigh unto him with his holy angels."*

Anthony could read no more. The great truths came like a flash of light, into the "dark night" of his soul. Closing the volume he looked at his benefactor and burst into tears.

"Come," said the old man. "I am glad to see you weep. There is every sign now that your despair will end, for hope is not far off whenever we indulge in the sweet joy of tears."

Leaving the hut together, the two men crossed the field with the sheep bounding before them. All day long they sat under the oak tree, herding their fleecy care. At nightfall they returned to the hut and in the morning again went forth. Thus the days passed with seemingly monotonous regularity. Thus six more months passed away, and the July sun again smites with his rays the thirsty fields.

Although the mental condition of Anthony was somewhat improved, the "dark night" still enveloped his soul. He spent the greater part of the time in reading "The Imitation," and listening to the reminiscent stories of the shepherd. Sometimes he even wished that hope might again become a part of his consciousness, but dismissing it as a vain thought, he would again relapse into his despairing reveries. But nature through her great minister time, had begun to heal his wounds of sorrow. Slowly, almost unconsciously, the bitterness and keenness of his sufferings diminished and he could contain himself with some equanimity, even in the midst of his sorrowful memories.

Aside from the fact that his mental torture was somewhat mitigated, another element had injected itself into his thoughts, causing him great anxiety. The shepherd had told him only recently, that the time would soon come, when he must leave his hut.

"My hermitage has sheltered you for the past eighteen months," he said. "You must not always remain with an old man like me. You have the higher education, combined with a knowledge of the world. Into that world you must again go

forth. It is your field of effort. You are young. The world is still before you, to live and labor in it."

Unhappy Anthony! When and where shall he go? The world has become a wilderness. Oh, that some power above the human level would tell him what to do! His benefactor, rude and unlettered though he was, had done him a most signal favor. He had sheltered him for full eighteen months and had divided his scanty fare with him. He could do no more. It was but natural that he wished his charge to return to the world.

In this unfortunate condition of mind, the unhappy Anthony would picture to himself a lodge in some trackless forest, where alone in his solitude he would be forever hidden from the gaze of man. There like an Anchorite of Old, he would force the stubborn earth to yield the few roots and herbs which would suffice for his sustenance. There he would become both hermit and saint, growing daily more holy in the sight of the Lord.

Anthony did not know that in his desire to serve the Lord in this state of perfect abnegation, he was giving his heart wholly to Him. By this impelling desire, he was drawn insensibly into the region of Hope, though he knew it not. For the first time in his life, he had begun to live, as if God and he were alone in the world. Oh, blessed be the man, who feeling the Divine impulse within him, reaches out thus unconsciously after the Divine felicity!

Yes, Anthony would turn recluse and give himself to God. The pomp and glitter of the world he would forever abjure. In his lonely home, be it on mountain top, or verdant plain, in fruitful valley, or on inaccessible peak, he would be alone with his Maker, and pour out his orisons perpetually to Him. To what heights of happiness and God-like glory

could he not attain in this ideal state, alone amid the solitudes of Nature. There the day would break in splendor, and the diamonded night would sooth his spirit and whisper into his ravished ear, her starry secrets. Oh! that his prayer might be heard and the conditions be fulfilled, whereby he might attain his holy desire. What a life, what a happiness, if only his ideal could be realized.

But he had overdrawn the picture. It was a wild flight of fancy. It was not for him. It was merely the reflex action of the "dark night," into which his soul was plunged. It was well for a saint to indulge in ecstasies and visions, for he was entitled to them. But for him it was far better to assume the role of penitent and ask pardon for his sins and shortcomings of the past. Only in this way could he attain to the freedom for which he longed. Only in this way could he hope to regain the grace he had lost.

Thus did the Demon Despair, again assert his baleful influence over him. Again direful forebodings take possession of his mind, and a phantasmagoria of pictures, in which venial faults multiplied a hundred fold, passed before his distorted vision. The continual succession of pictures condemn him for his folly and pride, and want of charity during his prosperous past. Hope has again fled. There is and can be, no future, for the soul is still plunged in the "dark night" of gloom.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### A Gleam of Hope.

**"Out of the Depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord hear my voice!"**

With these words of the "De Profundis" on his lips, the unhappy Anthony threw himself on his wretched bed on a certain night in August. On this particular night the rest he desired was not long in coming, and he was soon sound asleep. About midnight he awoke suddenly from a most vivid dream. In far away Switzerland he had been with Herminio, the old sage of the mountains. Startled at the vividness of his dream, he sat upright in his bed and peered into the darkness. Then directly above him a white light appeared, and he knew he was to be accorded a vision. Slowly the light faded, to appear the second and third time. Then near the ceiling of the room, clearly outlined against the surrounding blackness, there appeared the beautiful figure of an anchor. It was of a deep violet color, and glowed and pulsated like a thing of life. For about seven seconds it remained in manifestation, and then slowly faded away into the darkness.

"An anchor! An anchor!" exclaimed the happy Anthony. Thank God for the vision and its hopeful symbol. I shall yet be saved. And extending his clasped hands toward the ceiling, he burst into exclamations of praise, while tears of gratitude sprang to his eyes and coursed down his cheeks.

For some moments he remained motionless, with his hands outstretched, as if carved from stone. Then slowly regaining his composure, he sank back on his pillow and wept for joy. At last there was hope. But what a signal favor had been accorded him! Was he, the despairing man worthy of such a sign? Did the vision come direct from God, or from one of His Intermediaries? Surely his despairing heart would find consolation now! There was still something for which to live. Some power, far above the sorrowing world, was mindful of him! What a glorious thought! Some invisible agency, somewhere in the universe, some glorious intelligence apart from space and time, had deigned to manifest in this myserious way, hope and love for him.

In this state of newly found joy, he fell back on his pillow, but not to sleep. He felt that the vision in some unaccountable way was related to his dream of Herminio. In the dream he was again in the lodge of the sage. He saw the wild goats sporting on ledges of rock, and the soaring eagles making long graceful curves around their mountain eyries. In the sweet converse that followed, Herminio had told him that he was soon to receive the gift of knowledge, and expressed the wish of meeting him again. Then he suddenly awoke and in full waking consciousness, the vision had appeared.

How sweet it was to dream of Herminio! To see that noble form and hear the words of wisdom that fell from his lips. Then on awaking, to behold the Emblem of Hope, glowing in violet fire, above him in the darkness!

Contemplating on his happy dream, and the wonderful splendor of the vision that had been accorded him, Anthony lay awake till the dawn. On

one point he was fully resolved. He would not tell the shepherd of the vision. He held it as something too sacred to be revealed. He would hold its memory as a secret in his own heart; too sacred for utterance. Perchance if he again met the seer, oh happy thought, he would tell him all. But only he, the old sage of the mountains, might know his mighty secret—only he, but no other living man.

Hastily dressing himself, Anthony went into the adjoining room and awoke the shepherd, who was still sleeping heavily. The old man though somewhat surprised and taken back at the intrusion, at once arose and putting on his tattered garments, remarked that he would soon be ready.

"You are," he said, regarding Anthony with a critical eye, "very early this morning. "Can it be possible that my scolding has done you good? Although you have lived with me full eighteen months, this is the first time you have shown enough courage to rouse me from my sleep. I trust you will keep on getting more confidence and banish your gloomy thoughts, for you cannot live with me always."

After their simple breakfast, the two men repaired to the field. The shepherd could not fail to notice, that his charge walked with a more elastic step. He surmised that this was due to his constant admonitions and warnings. And he congratulated himself on the seeming fact that he alone had brought about the change.

All that day and part of the night, Anthony busied himself in reading "The Imitation." Through the instrumentality of the vision that had been accorded him, a wonderful light had illuminated and was beginning to make plain, the deeper, inner, occult meaning of the writing of à Kempis. The book was a mine of the Christian Faith, and now through

his supersensuous knowledge, Anthony was enabled to find in its hidden chambers, veins of the finest gold. He began dimly to perceive the meaning—the hidden meaning of the words, "Eternal Life," and the "Kingdom of Heaven." That the only way to happiness and ultimate perfection, is through "The Way of the Cross," and that one, must of necessity "live the life in order to know the doctrine."

For the first time since his affliction had been put upon him, Anthony was living in the atmosphere of hope. He knew—had positive knowledge, that his salvation was at hand. No longer could he doubt his final victory over dispondency and fear. He was promised hope from the higher Powers—Powers above this earth and this universe, had pledged him aid. How noble it was to think that he was related to this great Hierarchy of Beings, and that they made use of this beautiful way, to manifest their love for him.

For several weeks after this great event had come into his life, Anthony was for the greater part of the time wrapt in contemplation. At last there was a Divine order in the Cosmos. Ay, more than that, the entire material universe was mystical in its nature, and could only be mystically comprehended. What a splendid proof of the need of Faith! To what great heights might the soul ascend, and what ineffable glories would reveal themselves through the dim vistas of eternity! If man in the flesh was allowed to view a portion of Reality, and if that small portion was so surpassingly beautiful, how much more glorious and utterly beyond the conception of even the illuminated soul, must the whole of that ultimate Reality be! According to this concept, the mystic alone was the only man who

held the keys to the riddle of Life and the universe. Since the supreme object was the union of the soul with God, it necessarily followed that the universe itself could only be mystically interpreted. It was the Seer then, and he alone, who was in possession of the Divine Elixir. In the silence of his cell when friendly night overshadowed him, he was through the higher vision, made the recipient of the Heavenly secrets. By the sanctity of his life, he was put in communication with the channels of the Divine Grace and experienced the Mystical union.

Oh, the height and the depth of that wonderful love that the Creator shows for man! How wonderful that relationship between creature and Creator and how beautifully it manifests itself to the earnest and aspiring soul, even while imprisoned in a body of flesh. If, the faint foreshadowings of the great Reality, bring to the regenerated man, such superphysical knowledge of the majesty of God's love, how much more of his splendor must reveal itself to the true Mystic and the Saint!

Thus were the thoughts of Anthony, following on the days immediately after his marvellous vision. Although the old shepherd knew and was glad that his charge had improved to a wonderful extent, he, however, gave himself all the credit for the change. For eighteen long months they had been the closest of companions, and he felt endeared to him. In the early morning hours they had driven the sheep before them to the place of pasturage, and throughout the long day, the shepherd had done all in his power to cheer the disconsolate young man by relating his past reminiscences. Now that his efforts in this direction were bearing such good results, he talked less of his own exploits and sometimes said very little. Thus the happy Anthony was left more

and more to his own reveries. Giving his time to day dreams and the reading of "The Imitation," two more months passed rapidly away. Although he knew he was soon to leave the home of the shepherd, the question as to where he was to go, and what he was to do, did not now give him any great anxiety. Before his experience in the super-physical world, this problem concerned him greatly, but now in the light of his present knowledge, he left the matter in the hands of a higher Power, feeling that when the time was ripe, he would be given information to guide him rightly. He, who a short time before, saw only chaos and disorder in the universe, now comprehended through a re-awakened faith and the higher vision, an order and harmony in the visible world, and appreciated to its full value, the mystical relationship that existed between God and man.

So the days began to lose their monotony and the nights their despairing hours. Nature again paints with magic colors the purple East when Phosphor brings the dawn. Again there is music in the note of the thrush and the song of the night-ingale. In the noisy babble of the brook over the rounded pebbles, there is hidden a melody so sweet and beguiling, that the senses are lulled and soothed as if by enchantment, and the ceaseless chatter of the waters is transposed into a rhythm and harmony, steeping the faculty of the awakened spirit in reverie and forgetfulness.

It was at the close of a perfect day, when Anthony occupied by such thoughts, crossed the field and wended his way toward the hut of the shepherd. The witching hour of twilight held the landscape in its mystic spell. With lingering footsteps he loitered in his path, admiring the beauties that visible Nature spread before his knowing gaze. He beheld

the glories everywhere around him, with more than the poet's eye, for he had been permitted to lift a corner of the veil that hides the great Reality beyond. As he reached the hermitage, the short twilight had deepened into night and the familiar constellations coming into view, filled him with thoughts of adoration and of awe, so that with Job, he could exultingly exclaim: "Lo! These are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him. The thunder of His Power who can understand?"





## CHAPTER XIV.

### A Subjective Revelation.

Cloud towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes  
A hand that points and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought.

—In Memoriam.

When the penitent and troubled soul has longed ardently after God—when through constant aspirations it seeks only the Sovereign Good, it experiences the Mystical Union and becomes aware through the higher vision, of its relationship to its Divine Author.

Then lost in the contemplative life it no longer cares for the pomp and vainglory of a material world. Turning itself inward, it has discovered a world within its inmost recesses—a place of harmony and peace, where protected from the distractions of physical life, it enjoys moments of ecstasy, known only to the mystics and the saints.

It has been said, that when the soul reaches this height of perfection—this stage of the Cosmic consciousness,—that it is constantly guided by higher Powers and intelligences and made to perceive more and more its ultimate glory and destiny. Not only does the Almighty Father make His presence felt in the soul—nay, more than that, He reveals to the Divine fragment now seeking union with Him, ocular proof of His existence, and demonstrates

through the most wonderful phenomena, His great love for the pure in heart.

Several weeks after his remarkable vision, Anthony on retiring for the night, observed that the walls and ceiling of his room were filled and lit up with tiny points of fire. Now, these points of light gleaming like gems against the background of the darkness, did not cause the illuminated Anthony any fear. Instead it was with a feeling of rapture and delight, that he watched the little points of flame that transformed his homely room in the shepherd's hut into a bower of jewels. Sometimes the tiny lights would arrange themselves into groups of three and four, and leaving the wall or ceiling make a gradual approach toward him. When within a few feet of his bed they would pause, become stationary, and returning to the wall or ceiling, the group would break up and disappear. Then other groups would form and approach him likewise. They were of the most beautiful colors; red, yellow, green, lavender, blue. Arranging themselves in fantastic shapes they moved majestically toward him. It was a most singular fact, that while the component parts of each group were in constant motion around each other, yet the shape of the group remained unchanged. With eye lashes moistened by tears of gratitude, Anthony watched this silent play and interplay, of the higher forces of the universe. Slowly emerging from wall or ceiling or corner of the room, they would advance and retreat, mingling their little orbs of light in everchanging shades or color.

Night after night it was the privilege of Anthony to watch this marvellous display of the super-sensuous world. Among these points of light that were continually changing color, there was one

which burned above him with a steady ray. It was a pale yellow, and always shed its lucid rays directly overhead. Unlike the other lights which were constantly changing place, it was always stationary and retained its original shade of color—a pale yellow. While the other lights advanced and receded, rose and fell, coalesced and intermingled, this star-shaped sentinel, held his shining place unmoved. Like a silent watcher, he seemed to guard his lesser luminaries in their astral play.

Now there were nights when the display was less brilliant than usual, and at such times this star-shaped point, would naturally seem larger and more prominent. On one of these occasions, Anthony having cause to leave his bed, was astonished to find that this light followed him. It was stationary as long as he remained still, but when he moved, it also changed position, keeping its place always directly overhead. While he marvelled much at the beauty of the entire super-physical phenomena, this particular pale yellow star, held a strange fascination over him. It was faithful in its relation to him. Here was another mystery. It was a phenomenon within phenomena by which he was surrounded.

The condition of Anthony at this period cannot well be described. Through his aspirations and longings, he had been brought unconsciously into Reality. During the day his thoughts would constantly dwell on the supernal beauties that through the higher vision had been accorded him. Along with these marvellous experiences, he had noticed a recurrence of the vibrations that he had felt in the days of his youth. He remembered that at that time they had their origin in the pineal gland at the base of the brain, from which they proceeded downward along the spine, sweeping partially around

the body and terminating at the waist line. Now the vibrations had their origin at the top of the head, and while greater in intensity were much finer, sweeping over the face and back of the head simultaneously, they coursed over the body, ending and spending their force at the base of the spine and the region of the abdomen. Anthony noticed that whenever a great truth was flashed into his consciousness, it was always preceded and followed by a vibration. Can it be, he thought, that they come as messengers, heralding the glad tidings that the soul had prepared herself to be the recipient of another truth? Wonderful as was this conception, he found it to be really the case. A few days later, while composing two short poems in blank verse, the subject matter being of a mystical nature, the thoughts as they occurred, were accompanied by vibrations. He also discovered that if he attempted any literary work in the absence of the vibrations, the thought was mediocre. Thereafter in beginning any work of this kind, he always held himself negative, desiring and willing nothing. Then after he had stilled the senses, and reached the contemplative stage, the vibrations would occur; there were never less than two, and sometimes three and four. They succeeded one another rapidly. The duration of each vibration was from six to ten seconds, while the time between occurrences was from forty seconds to a full minute.

During the time and immediately after the visitations, Anthony felt an influx and an expansion of consciousness. He was lifted to higher planes of Being and felt an ecstasy and elevation of spirit, that far outweighed any joy of the flesh. If during those moments of illumination, he reduced his impressions to writing, he was himself amazed at the

beauty of the diction, for the thought had birth in light, while the words were tinged with fire.

In all this phenomena Anthony saw only the working of Divine Law. While the world itself had lost its power and interest, another realm of Being, was being revealed through the higher vision. In this newer world Anthony now lived. To function in this world and learn deeper and deeper secrets of Nature and the splendors of Creation, was to be his glorious privilege! He had been born anew. Were the sufferings he had endured and the agony he had undergone, but the birth pangs of the spirit? Was he stripped of all earthly possessions so that he would become humble and pure in heart? Had the grosser elements of his nature been burned and purged away so that his consciousness might rise to empyrean heights of thought?

Occupied with these reflections he ceased to be a servant of time, and began to live in the eternal. The past with its sad memories retreated further and further back into the consciousness and gradually lost its power of tyranny. The future now gave him little concern. He knew that in following the Divine urgings, which he must do to live the higher life, the future, rising out of such a present, could be none other than a glorious one.

Living in such a state, he grew daily in physical strength and spiritual courage. About this time he noticed that his dreams were becoming more vivid. Along with the dream experiences, there now occurred some times during sleep, a state of consciousness that was most singular. It was a state between waking and dreaming. On one of these occasions, he seemed to be flying through the air over a mountain path that was lined on each side by a stunted growth of trees. Realizing that the Higher Powers

now ruling his life, were granting him this privilege for some end, he framed the following question mentally and thus addressed them:

"Invisible Forces, that guard my destiny, I would have made clear what you desire me to do? How am I to leave the home of the shepherd, and where do you will I should go?"

As he asked this mental question, his motion in space ceased, and his light body became poised and stationary. The semi-twilight suddenly became dark, and out of the blackness there appeared before his vision, the hand of a man. It was cut off slightly above the wrist, and the knotted, twisted fingers showed it to be the hand of a peasant. On the third finger was a plain band silver ring. As it slowly faded from view, another hand appeared, belonging evidently to a man of the leisure class. The palm was not wide and the shape was regular. On the third finger was a gold ring, set with two golden hearts. Anthony noticed the peculiar shape of the ring and the position of the two hearts that formed the set. Then it faded into the night and a third hand took its place. From the malformation of the thumb and the shape of the fingers, Anthony instantly recognized it as the hand of the shepherd. As it faded from view he awoke suddenly, to find himself in his rude bed, under the roof of his benefactor.

Two days after this remarkable occurrence, Anthony and the old man were seated as usual under the oak tree. The sheep had scattered over the hills and were contentedly cropping the short grass that grew sparsely between the rocks. The sincerity expressed in the faces of the two men, engaged as they were in simple, earnest conversation, completed

a pastoral picture of great beauty, to be found only under the blue sky of a Sicilian afternoon.

"I am going to the hut early this evening," said the old man, as he picked up his shepherd's crook, which had been lying on the ground beside the tree. "When you come I will have the supper ready." So saying he started in the direction of the hermitage, leaving Anthony alone. Left to himself, the young man fell into a reverie. He was, however, soon awakened from his day dream by the appearance of a man crossing the field. As he approached, he said he was worn out from the heat of the day and wished to rest.

Anthony regarded him with surprise. It was evident he had come from a long distance, for he bore the marks and stains of travel. Seating himself under the tree beside Anthony, he drew a long breath, and wiping his perspiring face, with a red handkerchief, he exclaimed:

"May the Virgin protect me for undertaking such a journey. Do you know young man, that I have walked all the way through Italy?"

"Possibly so," replied Anthony. "From where did you start?"

"From the little village of Bergun, in Switzerland," replied the traveller. "I was born in Switzerland and lived the best part of my years in Bergun."

"But what prompted you to make this long journey overland?" queried Anthony.

"Merely my love for novelty," rejoined the traveller. "Do not believe that poverty constrained me to such a course, for I am not a poor man. The patrimony my parents left me, amounted to a snug little fortune according to Swiss standards. I have an only brother living at Palermo, whom I have not seen for ten years. Some months ago I resolved to

pay him a visit. After my preparations were made for the journey, I thought it would be a most novel experience to travel alone. Never having cared much for the conventions of the modern world, I at once proceeded to put my eccentric notion into effect. I have been over two months on the way; and in spite of some discomforts occasioned by my long tramp through Italy, I must say I have enjoyed my novel journey."

Somewhat amused at this long though simple speech of the traveller, Anthony sought to draw him out with further questions.

"Is this the first time you find yourself in Sicily?" he asked.

"Indeed yes," replied the traveller. "My brother who lives in Palermo, is an exporter of lemons and fruit. It was on his account that I undertook this toilsome journey."

"Will you return to Switzerland after visiting your brother?"

"Surely. It is my home. Its wild scenery and lofty peaks have nurtured me from childhood. Were you to see my country, you would love it better than your own."

"I have seen it," replied Anthony, "though seven years have passed since then."

"And pray what was the occasion of your visit?"

"It was on my honeymoon," replied Anthony, and as he uttered the words, a rush of such unutterable thoughts came over him, that he bowed his head in his hands.

"And why should the mentioning of your honeymoon cause you such sadness and dejection?" asked the traveller.

"Because of the happy scenes that are forever



past." Then Anthony becoming reminiscent, related the story of his life, his sorrows and sufferings.

The traveller listened with great interest. When Anthony had finished his narrative, he was silent for some time. The telling of the story, visibly affected the traveller. He lost his jocund careless air and became very grave.

"Tell me," he said finally, "what are your plans for the future?"

"Alas, I know not," answered Anthony.

"Listen," said the traveller. "Let me advise you. You say you have been an instructor. Now do not attempt to work at something outside of your calling. There are families living in my native town of Bergun, who would gladly employ you as tutor for their children. These people have money and they will pay you well. Go to Bergun, by all means. Were I in your place, I would not wait another day."

"Possibly so, but are you certain I will find employment such as you mention?"

"I am positive of it. Have I not lived there all my life, and am I not intimately acquainted with every family in the place? Then besides, you speak French fluently, and that is the universal if not official, language of the canton. Taking all in all you could ask for no happier combination."

As he thus delivered himself, the traveller leaned idly against the tree and held his arm in such a position, that his left hand was exposed to full view. To his amazement Anthony recognized it as the first hand that had appeared to him two nights previous, when he had gone into the super-physical condition. It was an exact counterpart, a wide coarse hand with the knotted fingers, and there on the third finger was the plain band silver ring. Recovering quickly from his surprise, he gazed at the

ground for some minutes and thus communed with himself:

"Two nights ago I demanded of the Forces, when in the super-physical condition, what they would have me do. On making this demand, there instantly appeared before me in the darkness, the figure of a man's hand—a wide coarse hand. On the third finger there was a plain band silver ring. Today there comes before me in the physical, a man having such a hand—an exact duplicate. On the third finger he wears a plain band silver ring. He urges me to go to Switzerland—to the little village of Bergun, his native place. Marvellous phenomenon! Is this the answer to my question? Are the invisible Powers now guarding me, to inform me in this mysterious way, of their desire and their will?"

Then slowly recollecting himself, he raised his eyes from the ground and addressed the traveller:

"I think well of your advice," he said, "and believe I will follow it." I have been over eighteen months a guest of the shepherd who lives in yonder hut. He has been very kind to me, but the time has come when I must leave him, although it will be with great regret. Would you advise me to start soon?"

"Yes, I would not tarry long. You have been idle a long time. Sorrow is keener when you are unoccupied. Therefore I would get to work again as soon as circumstances would permit. But do not delay."

"Well, my friend, I thank you for your counsel and advice. Is there anything more you can tell me about Bergun and its people?"

"No, I have told you all you need know for the present. On your arrival there, you will find a

kindly, hospitable people and they will appreciate your work. You will find it a joy to live among them. Now I must resume my travel. I will follow this stream and camp tonight along side of it. Adieu! friend, and may good fortune befriend you. When I return to Bergun, I will expect to find you there. And now, adieu!"

At these words the mysterious traveller with a motion of his hand waved Anthony a last farewell and disappeared down the dusty road, leading to Palermo.

On the day following Anthony was somewhat reticent, talking very little to the shepherd. Late in the afternoon he felt impressed to go to the hut, and making some slight excuse, started for the hermitage. When he opened the rude little gate and stepped into the yard, he saw a man on horse-back coming up the road. When opposite the hut, the rider drew rein and dismounting, walked rapidly toward him.

"Tell me," said the stranger, "if I am on the right road for Taormina?"

"You are," replied Anthony.

"I am travelling through the country," he continued, "and am anxious to visit Taormina on account of its historical associations. I suppose you have been in the place?"

"Yes, though it has been some years ago. Are you travelling alone?"

"Yes, I am alone, and for the first time in my life, I can follow my own impulses and there is nobody to criticise me therefor. It is a liberty I have not enjoyed for years. Cramped and confined in a narrow circle of daily duties, it is really a treat to be free for once and to be able to fling custom and convention to the winds."

From his conversation and deportment, Anthony knew the gentleman to be a man of rank. Inviting him into the hut, he asked him what his occupation or calling might be.

"I am," answered the stranger, "a teacher of mathematics in the university of Sorbonne."

"Ah," exclaimed Anthony. "I was not far from right. I knew you were a man of learning. But I am more than glad to hear you are an instructor in the famous university of Sorbonne. What a strange coincidence that we should meet in this way. Before the cruel hand of Fate reversed my fortunes, I, too, was a teacher in the university of Messina."

"In what capacity?" asked the stranger.

"Italian literature," replied Anthony. "I held the chair for five years, until the Titanic earthquake destroyed Messina and deprived me of my family."

"How came you here, and what are your plans for the future?"

As an answer to this question, Anthony related the story of his adventures since the destruction of Messina. How bereft of reason, broken in body and spirit, he wandered through the ruins in search for his dead. How in the agony of spirit he walked on for four full days through the wild open country, West of Messina. How the kind old shepherd had befriended him, and proved himself a good Samaritan, taking care of him as a father would protect his child. Of his slow recovery from a condition, that was bordering for months almost on insanity, caused by grief over the loss of family and possessions.

"And now," said the stranger, after the conclusion of the narrative, "since your condition is becoming normal, what have you in mind for the future?"

"I have not fully decided what I will do. It is

only during the past few months, that my mental condition has improved to such an extent, that I feel confident enough to undertake anything at all."

"I understand your situation. You do not care at present, to assume a position, to which great responsibility is attached. But I have in mind a project you might take up. A year ago, when I was spending my vacation in Switzerland, I visited the little town of Bergun in the Tyrol. I found there quite a number of well-to-do families who employ tutors for their children. In the summer months the population is augmented by tourists, who as a rule, are well supplied with money. Why not take up this line of work. You will find it not only pleasant, but profitable. There are no doubt other places in Switzerland where you could find more employment of the same character; but I mention Bergun, because I was at that particular place. Were I you, I would go to Switzerland. Visit Bergun first; you may go to some other town, but Bergun would be my choice."

"It is a strange coincidence," again replied Anthony, "that only yesterday, a traveller passing here in the fields, advised me along the same lines. He is an inhabitant of the village of Bergun, having resided there all his life."

"Ah," smilingly replied the stranger. "That gives some proof to my contention. An advice is always regarded as having weight when it is found to share the views of another."

"Yes, it adds to its certainty. But do you think the present a good time to set out on the journey?"

"There could be no better. We are now at the beginning of the summer season. Young men and women, accompanied by wealthy parents, are streaming into Switzerland from all sides. They

like to mix a little knowledge of science and literature with their mountain climbing. This gives you a capital opportunity you should not neglect."

"It seems feasible," replied Anthony, "and I am much taken up with the idea."

"It is just the thing for you; just the opening you need. Then too, there is a certain kind of independence attached to this kind of work, which is missing in other vocations. Your pupils are for the season only. With some of them it is quite the fashion, to imbibe a little learning, along with their summer rambles. They imagine it gives them social standing. If so, well and good. Let them imagine what they please, but seize the opportunity nevertheless, and you can provide yourself with a comfortable income and enjoy a measure of independence while following your chosen line of work."

With these words the stranger raised his left hand very carefully and placed it gently on the table.

"I had the misfortune yesterday," he continued, "to sprain my wrist; it gives me acute pain at times and I must be careful not to do it further harm."

Anthony scrutinized the hand very closely. It was an exact duplicate of the second hand that had appeared to him on the night when he was in the super-physical condition. The well formed hand of a gentleman of the leisure class. The narrow palm, the neatly kept fingers and nails, and there on the third finger was the gold ring, set with two golden hearts. Too surprised to say anything, Anthony remained silent.

"I must," finally exclaimed the traveller, "be on my way, or the night will overtake me. Do not forget to follow my advice; for from the bottom of my heart, I believe it will be to your best interest."

Then he strode out of the hut and Anthony followed him to the gate. The sun had almost set, and the trees and hills were casting their longest shadows.

"Farewell," said the traveller, "we may never meet again, but I wish you good luck and fortune on the Alpine heights of Switzerland. When you arrive there, you might write me a letter. Here is my Paris address."

Writing his street and number on the leaf of a memorandum book, he tore it out and gave it to Anthony. Then bidding him a last good-bye, he turned his horse into the road and started off toward Taormina.

When Anthony returned to the hut, he found the shepherd busily engaged preparing the supper. Of the visit of the two men who had given Anthony their mysterious advice, he knew nothing, nor was he told anything regarding it. There is a law that prevents the recipient of occult knowledge, from divulging his information to anyone not functioning on his plane. Although Anthony did not know of the existence of such a law, he obeyed it unconsciously and kept his secrets in his own heart.

That night he retired early but not to sleep. The astral display on this particular evening was less brilliant than usual, only a few scattered points of light being visible on the walls and ceiling. In the absence of the customary splendor, it was a singular fact that the bright yellow star, which always shone overhead, burned with much greater brilliancy—so bright in fact, that little tiny rays of light shot out from it in all directions; thus heightening the effect of the mysterious phenomenon with their slender golden beauty.

Under the light of his guardian star, Anthony felt secure. A deep sense of peace and harmony

possessed his soul, and in this happy state, his thoughts went back to the events of the past few days. New occurrences having strange occult meaning, were being thrust upon him. A few nights previous, he had demanded of the invisible Forces, the knowledge as to what he was to do. Three hands, each of a distinct character and each bearing certain marks, had appeared successively in the darkness. Since then, two men having hands which are exact duplicates have advised him to go to Switzerland. This then, was the answer to his question, and in this occult way, the Forces had answered it. What was this strange power that was thus advising him? What marvellous intelligence was this, that outside and beyond space and time, showed him a care and friendship beyond all human bounds?

The third hand, that of the shepherd, still remained to be accounted for. What message would the old man hold for him? Would he too, advise him to go to far away Switzerland? Surely, he also had a part to play in this strange phenomena? This was still to come, and with this thought uppermost in his mind, Anthony lay awake till far into the night and finally fell into a quiet sleep, under the rays of his guardian star.

The next morning he accompanied the old man to the field as usual. Late in the afternoon, the conversation turned on Anthony's future. The shepherd in his stoical way, being the first to mention it.

"I believe," he said, "that you are now on the way to a normal condition of health and spirit. Have you any idea as to what you intend to do; for surely a man at your age, must still have hope and interest in some kind of a future?"



For some moments Anthony was silent. It was evident from the analogy, that the old man had a part to play, but what the part was to be, Anthony himself did not know. He must answer the shepherd's question, but he must conceal from him the advice he had received from the two strangers a few days previously. With these thoughts in mind, he raised his eyes from the ground and framed the following answer:

"Yes, it is true that of late, I have wondered greatly as to what the future held for me. Every man has a call for some kind of work, and I, like all other men, have my special call. In thinking over what the future might have in store for me, I have during the past few weeks, lived over again in memory, the happy experiences of my honeymoon trip in picturesque Switzerland. I remember vividly that when I came through the little village of Bergun, I was somewhat surprised at the great number of tutors who were employed by wealthy families and tourists. The tourists especially, seemed to be very much taken up with this means of obtaining knowledge. Now I have been impressed with the idea of going to Switzerland. In this little town of Bergun, I would find remunerative employment. There in my chosen life work is a field for my efforts; but alas you know I have not the means to defray the expense of such a journey."

"Have no anxieties," replied the old man. "We can easily overcome the seeming difficulty. The main thing to be happy over is the fact that you have enough confidence in yourself to make the journey and undertake the work. You will remember that when you first came here, I told you how I relieved a traveller of his gold. How the priest had pardoned me, and finally the traveller himself

appeared at my house, one night, and refused to accept the coins even when I confessed to him I was the man, and offered to make restitution. You will remember that I told you I put the twelve pieces back in the little iron pot, and buried them under the oak tree in the yard near the hut. These twelve pieces of gold I will give to you. The amount is enough to cover all the cost of your journey. So that the wrong I did to one man, will redound to the good and benefit of another."

As the shepherd finished speaking, his face beamed with joy. It was evident that the sum he had offered his charge was not given half-heartedly. He did not try to conceal his feelings from Anthony. On the contrary he gave way to them altogether, and with the spontaneity of a boy, said he would go at once to the hut, procure a spade and proceed at once to dig up the gold.

This, then, was the part the shepherd was to play. The owner of the third hand which appeared to him in the super-physical state, was to defray the expense of his journey, and wish him God-speed on his way. What a wonder was this! The occult Forces had again demonstrated their mystic power. There was nothing to do now but to obey. Aware that he was now being guided by the higher invisible Forces, Anthony felt intuitively that he must trust them without question. He had reached that point in his evolution, where the Great Ones of earth, were influencing his life and actions by occult secrets and processes, and while he realized that it was a glorious privilege to be so placed, yet he felt that loyalty and obedience to them, was now his sacred bounden duty.

On the following day he made ready to set out on his long journey. The old man gave him the

twelve pieces of gold and accompanied him as far as the site of Messina. At some distance from the site of the old city, Anthony boarded a steamer at the pier, and took leave of the old shepherd. After the last adieus were said and the steamer had moved out into the straits, the old man remained on the pier until the vessel faded from view.

Anthony felt keenly the sense of separation. His benefactor had showed him the greatest kindness and had cared for him as a fond parent might care for his own child. And now they had parted and possibly would never see each other again. But they had met for a purpose. It was not accident or caprice, that had thrown them together; for Anthony now believed that everything that occurs, occurs under law. That all events, human and super-human alike, are under the domain of rigorous iron law, and that the entire universe, both visible and invisible, is linked together by an eternal chain of causation.

Three days later the steamer reached Genoa. From there Anthony crossed over into Switzerland and soon reached the little town of Bergun. Here he remained several days, and while greatly admiring the sylvan beauty of the place, set as it was amid the rugged mountains, he seemed to forget the object of his visit, and instead of applying himself to the business in hand, wandered over the mountains, amid the same solitudes where in company with his beloved Regina he had spent his honeymoon six years previously. On the third day of these rambles, a feeling of depression took hold of him and he became dejected and melancholy. After all, why had he come to Switzerland? Surely he was not a man of means, to spend the time idly in Alpine passes, viewing the beauty of the mountain scenery. He had been advised to come here in

the capacity of tutor, to impart knowledge to those who wished to be taught privately, but he was making no start in that direction. Something kept him from even making inquiries regarding the work. As he thus communed with himself, he reached the foot of a narrow path that was lined on both sides by a stunted growth of oak trees. Instinctively he began to walk up the path. Where had he seen that path before? Then he remembered, that on that memorable night in the home of the shepherd, when he had gone into the super-physical state, he had seemed to fly through space over a mountain path lined on both sides by a growth of trees. Here was the path identically the same as it had appeared to him in the higher consciousness. On both sides were the stunted trees. As he advanced along its stoney way, the road became suddenly familiar, and as he reached an open space, there was revealed standing in the doorway of a hermitage, a venerable old man, whose flowing white beard reaching to his waist, reminded Anthony of the Patriarchs of Old. In the dying glory of the sunlight his bronzed features seemed to glow with a celestial radiance, so pure and noble were his thoughts. As Anthony came near, the old man smiled in recognition, and embraced him tenderly, saying:

"So Anthony, my son, has at last returned."

"Yes," replied Anthony, "he has returned, to find in your blessed society, everlasting rest and peace."

Then Anthony wept for joy, and bowed his head on the shoulder of Herminio the Seer.

# BOOK HELD

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eacher, with his

right hand resting on the knee of his venerable instructor. Gazing into the depths of those pale blue eyes that reveal behind them an indomitable spirit, he rapturously exclaims:

"Tell me, Oh master, what is that unseen force which brought us first together, and after years of separation, united us again? Why am I so happy in your presence, and how was I impressed to undertake the long journey that brought me ultimately to you?"

"In answer, my son," replied Herminio, "I must go back to the time of your boyhood. In your earliest recollections, you will remember that you were imbued with a love for knowledge, and admired Nature in her myriad manifestations of form and change. At the tender age of four, you came under my guidance and became my charge. As you progressed toward boyhood, your thirst for knowledge increased, while your love of visible nature became so great, that at the age of eleven years, you would take long walks over the wooded mountains and indulge in long reveries. You not only beheld the beauty of nature, but you felt it as well—felt it in your inmost Being. From that time forward, you became a nature worshipper. You lived in the hills and vales, and exulted to hear the echoes as they bounded and rebounded from crag to crag, and peak to peak, until they were lost in the depths of remote canyons. In active moods of nature you were also a keen participant. The rustling of the leaves in the forest, was to your ravished ear, a melody more beguiling than that which came from an Aeolian harp, in the hands of a skillful musician."

"Now, one of the unmistakable signs of an advanced soul, is this intense love for the beauties of nature. The poet, the philosopher, the sage and the

saint, are all nature worshippers. It is a universal mark of depth of soul and purity of heart. The Christian Beatitude, "Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God," takes on a new and most wonderful meaning, when we have evolved sufficiently to know that they who love nature, are given to meditation—the deepest form of prayer. In these blessed moments of meditation, the soul reaching upward to the One Reality, functions on higher planes of Being, and finally ascends into the tenebraes surrounding God."

"Now all these marks of a pure and advanced soul, you manifested in childhood and early youth. As time passed and early manhood approached, you took up science and philosophy, following a course of action which all advanced souls have followed in the past, and will follow in the future."

"But with all these seeming virtues, you had not reached to that purity of heart, which the Christian Beatitude implies. On the contrary, there was an element of pride in your nature, which allied you with the selfish intellectuals of your time and country. For years you essayed to discover the secrets of nature through the planes of the intellect. I remember well with what solicitude I watched your early struggles. Then you met a young woman and experienced the passion of physical love. Later, you married her. A son blessed your union—Angelo you called him. How tender and yet how strong was this gift from heaven which bound you to your wife—your beloved Regina. What a vision of happiness! A young professor in an official position, whose heritage was honor and riches and the good will of men. Surely such blessings are all that are asked of heaven by the ordinary soul. But you asked for more. Your's was not the ordinary soul. You

longed for knowledge. You aspired to know the Great Reality that lies beyond the world of illusion. In your searchings, after truth you delved deep into the heart of Plato, and brought forth from that mighty consciousness, images of the Divine Beauty. About this time you will remember that on a particular night, you dreamed that you stood at the base of a high mountain, whose distant summit was outlined boldly against the blue ether. Your perilous journey up this mountain, was symbolical of the pain and anguish you were to experience in the physical world on the pilgrimage toward Reality. The stream of crystal water in which you bathed your bleeding feet and hands, was a symbol of the River of Life in whose vivifying waters, all bruises and wounds are made whole and healed. Lastly, the Temple of Knowledge, that edifice of marvellous beauty, white as the driven snow, would not suffer you to enter through its sacred portals, "until you had overcome the superhuman ordeal of making the Unity with Self."

"Now the loss of your wife and child, and your worldly possessions, was the means which the Divine Providence brought about in order that you could make this very Unity with the Self. During the first stages of the ordeal, you cried out in anguish to the Almighty Power to let the chalice of bitterness pass from your lips. So cried every evolving soul in the past—so will they cry out in the future. But there is no turning back. Once the call for knowledge has been sincerely made, the soul must go on and endure the ordeal."

"You speak as though you had gone through a similar experience," interrupted Anthony.

"My son," replied the sage, "I would have you know that I have sounded the depths of all human experience; what you have suffered and endured,



that have I also experienced in agony and tears. The emotions of the poor human heart, must be successfully overcome if we would attain to super-physical knowledge. If we would lift the veil that separates us from the world of illusion, we must learn to control the heart, which binds us to that world. This is no easy matter. In truth it is the most Herculean task that was ever required of mortal man. I have said mortal, but in reality the man who has reached this stage, is more than mortal, otherwise he would not be able to live through the ordeal. The Wise Ones of earth never put this test on any soul, unless that soul has been awakened into Life. For many years prior to the awakening, it has been the particular business of these Wise Ones, to bring this evolving soul to the point of realization. That accomplished, it is then made to endure the severest of all trials, the most agonizing ordeal, and this is nothing less than its crucifixion on the Cross of Matter."

"Now the Crucifixion has an allegorical meaning, and it is the allegorical side in which we are now interested. After his death on the Cross of Matter—that is, after he has died to the physical world and its illusions—there comes a time immediately after—the Resurrection, when the soul living on a higher plane of Being, is controlled and influenced by occult arts and processes, until at last having lost all interests in the lower world, it seeks seclusion on lonely mountain top, or desert plain, and this in very truth, is its ascension into heaven."

"Now I have given you the chief points in the history of that stupendous drama of the soul, on its way to Godhood. I know that you cannot grasp the great truths and appreciate their meaning and importance is so short an outline, so it will be necessary

to go more into details, in order that the great principles that underlie human life, may be brought out more clearly."

"I know of no better method in the way of presenting the great truths that are vital to all humanity, than by a recital of the incidents that took place during the years of my early manhood. As each soul is a part of the Great Life that animates Creation, it necessarily follows that the experiences and sufferings of one soul, will find a responsive chord and sympathetic kinship in all the others."

"On the occasion of your first visit, if I remember rightly, I told you I was born in Thessaly, not far from the celebrated Vale of Tempe. My father was a shepherd and in this rustic occupation, I loved to share. When a mere child, I followed my parent day after day, over the plains, and helped in the tending of the sheep. How well I remember the time when he taught me to play on the reed, and how proud I was when at last I mastered the rudiments of the art and was able to play the simple melodies that echoed over the hills and dales of our sylvan retreat. These were the happy years of childhood. How quickly they passed! Soon I grew into a stalwart youth, rustic and uncouth—bronzed and tanned by the wind of the Thessalian plains. But withal I was a lover of nature, a sharer in her active moods as well as her passive states. At the age of eighteen I suffered an irretrievable loss. My parents died. With my patrimony I went to Paris, France, and entered the university of that name. There I absorbed knowledge like a sponge absorbs water. But after six years of study, the ways of the world and false standards of life that I observed in the wicked place, made me long for the hills and

vales. The call was so strong that I obeyed it. A certain physician who seemed to have my interest at heart advised me to go to Switzerland. I came on here to Bergun. When the train reached Switzerland, my heart beat lighter. I was returning to that environment I had so loved in my childhood. So ravished was I with this thought of independence and freedom, that my muse took possession of my Being, and induced me to write the following lines before I reached Bergun. To the poem I gave the title: 'Farewell to the City.' So impressed was I with the originality of the composition, that I can now recall every word and will recite it for you.

#### FAREWELL TO THE CITY

I left the growing city in its pride  
And crossed long leagues of desert wilderness  
To reach the far confine my spirit loved,  
The country village, with its narrow streets,  
Whose shaded walks and porticos appeal  
Forever to my fancy. Here I find  
The place where man meets man on common  
ground,  
Unfettered by convention and false pride  
Oft found in evidence in city streets.  
I love the villagers—their simple ways,  
With lives so humble and withal so pure,  
That sage and poet praise their characters.  
Here Nature's noblemen are found,  
Whose speech so truthful coming from the heart,  
Oft wets the cheek with sympathetic tears.  
Farewell proud city; I despise thy ways  
And hurry onward, through this wilderness  
To distant farms and villages, to seek  
That sweet content for which my spirit longs,  
And like the sages, and the bards of Old,  
I'll steep thy memory in forgetfulness,  
To find true pleasures in the woods and fields.

"On reaching Bergun," continued Herminio, "I fell in love with the place and took up my abode with an old man who called himself Elpenor. He lived in a small house on the outskirts of the village. He was a very learned, yet withal a very unassuming man. I can never forget him, for he was my teacher, who took me through the dangerous years of my awakening into life. At first I knew nothing of his greatness, nor of the high stage to which he had attained in that great hierarchy of Beings, of which he was an initiated member. But I grew to love him, for he was indeed a philosopher, who seemed to see into the very hearts of men. For three years I lived under his roof, caring for no other society. Together we tilled the few acres of ground that furnished us sustenance, and during the long evenings, he would read me stories from the ever living pages of Fenelon and Lamartine. But I noticed above all things that he insisted on a purity of heart. Be always innocent, and pure of heart, he would say, for it is given to the pure in heart and they alone, to know of the mysteries of God."

"And so for three years we dwelt together. Often I would ask him what he meant by Self-knowledge, the living Waters of Life, and the mystical States of Consciousness, to which he now sometimes referred. His answer was that in a short time I would know—that my soul was now reaching that point in its evolution, where, what he termed the Great Awakening, was about to occur. I remember this period of my life very clearly. I began to long for knowledge in itself. The sayings of the wisest philosophers failed to satisfy me. The famous exploits of gods and heroes, as set forth in the Homeric and Virgilian hexameters, seemed to

have lost their soul stirring appeal. I longed to get at the heart of things. The world had become an idle, passing show—a cheap theatre, wherein the plays were staged by ambitious worldly men, who courted the applause of worldlings—for the audience as well as the actors, were moved and swayed by the lowest physical impulses and desires.”

“One night. Ah! How I remember that eventful night,” exclaimed the seer, as his gaze rested lovingly on the face of his pupil, “I was awakened suddenly from a profound sleep. From my bedroom window, I saw the crescent moon, then at its second quarter, low in the West. Directly opposite my bed there was another window, that opened on the North. Looking through this window, as I had so often done before, I was struck with the deep blue color of the sky and noticed certain stars that I knew, did not belong to that quarter of the North. To make the phenomena still more surprising, the old constellations with which I had been so familiar, were altogether missing from that part of the heavens. Then, as if by magic, white clouds appeared and formed themselves into bands, hiding for a moment, the golden stars from view. These bands kept in rapid motion and, as they occulted certain stars, others would come into the field of vision. Although I admired this beautiful display, I could not account for it. The clouds were moving too rapidly, and the lights could not possibly be stars. No doubt a storm might be approaching, and the strange occurrence was due to some disturbed condition of the atmosphere. I must investigate. So rising from my bed, I made a light. Imagine my terror when I found I had not looked through the window at all, for the curtain was drawn closely over it. In the fear which seized me, I trembled so violently that I let the light

fall from my hands, and the room was again in darkness. Then on the curtain and on the wall for a distance of two or three feet on each side of the widow, the vision again reappeared. There was the blue sky and behind the white ever-moving bands of clouds, the twinkling stars would appear and disappear, making a picture of exquisite beauty. Then fear took such possession of me that I fell violently on my bed, and when I recovered myself, to look again at the vision, it was slowly disappearing, and finally faded away into the night."

"The next morning I told my teacher and master, the story of my marvellous experience. But my narrative did not in any way excite him. Instead he seemed to be in an expectant mood and took my story as a matter of course. Gazing at me from the very depths of his spiritual eyes, he addressed me as follows:

"My son," said he, "you have for the first time in your existence, been granted the privilege of lifting the veil that separates one plane of nature from another. You now know there is a higher department of nature than the world in which you have always functioned. Now this is self-knowledge. You have not been asked to believe—you have not been told. You have seen. Having advanced to the rank of those advancing spirits, who function consciously in this higher world, you become a part of their consciousness, you have risen to their level and on this higher level they can communicate with you."

"For a long time I was silent. Overcome with awe and wonder, in the presence of the Great Truth, I could scarcely form an intelligent question. Finally recovering myself, I thus addressed my master:

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"Elpenor," I exclaimed, "if I have respected you in the past, I must adore you in the future. Before the greatness and majesty of the truth, I am silent. Before you, my master, I bow in recognition."

"At these words, the venerable man smiled and replied: You do not owe me adoration. For adoration and worship belong to God alone; but you do owe me confidence and loyalty. As your master I am bound to aid and direct you. It is my mission to teach the Great Truth to those who have awakened into life. You are willing to receive. I am bound to give. It is the Law.

"Then you cannot," I interposed, "keep this knowledge for yourself?"

"No," he replied. "For I have become a channel of the Divine Life. Exalted souls on still higher stages of evolution, are constantly giving me knowledge. Now these exalted souls are fed and nourished by other Beings in conditions of nature still more exalted. So that the number of hierarchies, that function in the mystical states of Being, is infinite, endless and eternal."

"Seeing that I was absorbed in thought and receptive, the master continued:

"You are now recognized as a pupil, who has commenced the long pilgrimage toward reality. In the past that lies behind you, you made the journey unconsciously; but from now on, you will unfold your powers consciously, and proceed every step of the way in light and knowledge. As a proof of this higher consciousness, you have been given astral vision—the power of piercing the veil that separates the physical from the astral world. Henceforth your viewpoint of life will be altogether changed. For some years you will remain a pupil, until you have received sufficient knowledge, when in turn

you will become a teacher. Receiving knowledge from the Great Ones, through your intuition and astral experiences, you will pass it on to others who are awakening into life. Overwhelmed with the great truth and lost on wonder, they will come to you for help and guidance. It will become your privilege to assist them on the perilous way to Reality, and in this your bounden duty, you will find the greatest joy and consolation."

"For five more years," continued Herminio, "I remained with my master. I was a worthy pupil and as I grew in compassion and purity of heart, he unveiled to me, more and more of the mighty secrets of Nature. When at last extreme old age, caused the physical encasement that enshrined his noble spirit to wear away, he predicted the day and hour of his death. Then on a certain summer evening, he laid down on his couch and composed himself as if he fain would sleep. Assuring me that after the dissolution, he would often be with me on the inner planes, he pressed my hand two or three times, and passed away as easily as a child falling asleep. Covering him with water lilies, symbolical of his purity of heart, I remained with him alone till the dawn, that being his wish. On the morrow, assisted by a few friends from the village, we buried his body in the country church yard. Then I retired to this place and built my hermitage. You are now my pupil, from a pupil you will in time become also a master with other pupils under your charge. But come, the morning wanes. Let us go forth for a ramble over the hills. I know you are a lover of super-sensuous knowledge, but that in the meantime you still appreciate the beauties of your present environment, for to the aspiring conscious soul, even physical nature, is ever fair."



## CHAPTER XVI.

### Alexis the Singer.

Pleasures that were your own of old  
May be enjoyed through others still;  
No man will then complain of us  
Care for ourselves was all we had;  
Through all life's process various  
You must have virtue to be glad.

—West-Eastern Divan.

The sage and his pupil continued their wanderings over the hills the rest of the morning. Pausing at times to linger in the shade of some knotted oak, Herminio would become reminiscent and related incidents that had occurred to him during his long residence in these rugged mountain regions. Late in the afternoon, when they had again paused to rest, the sage told Anthony that a certain young man of great attainments and rare beauty of face and form, visited him at intervals. "He is due here again this afternoon," continued the old man. "If I mistake not he is coming now," then pointing out a narrow path which had been cut through the underbrush, he indicated the direction from which the youth generally approached. Anthony looked, and beheld a youth coming up the path. He was possessed of great beauty, and could not have been more than twenty years of age. His long golden hair hung in loose curls over his neck and shoulders. His robe was of deep blue, fastened at the waist with a golden girdle. In his left hand he carried a silver lyre.

Striking the strings with his right, he filled the grove with dulcet echoes, accompanying them all the while with short stanzas of song as he proceeded. When suddenly he found himself in the presence of the sage and his pupil, he dropped his lyre on his knee and exclaimed:

"Good master, is this the new pupil of whom you have told me so much, and have been awaiting so long?

"Yes it is he," replied Herminio. "In him you see another added to my list of sons. His name is Anthony and I find him a most worthy pupil. He endured his ordeal well."

"Greetings, Anthony," said the stranger, and bowing low, he added: "My name is Alexis. I am a wandering poet and my home is in Greece; although I prefer to call my country by its ancient name, Hellas, because it sounds much sweeter to me."

Anthony was too much embarrassed to make any reply. In the sudden appearance of so beautiful a singer, he felt abashed and confused.

"I crave your pardon if I have caused you any embarrassment, by my complacent air and careless mien," observed the young man, as he slightly tilted his glorious head and gazed into the eyes of Anthony. "I know I am impulsive and open minded—too much so sometimes. However, we poets cannot help that. It is our nature to be that way. Trouble and care and sorrows of the lower world have so long been out of our consciousness, that we act as natural as the birds that flit about in yonder tree. To them life is all joy. So it is to me. The whole visible world is an epitome of beauty. There is beauty of soul as well as beauty of form, and the more beautiful the soul, the more beautiful the form. Of this world of

changing forms, it is my privilege to sing. It is my expression of life. I think in metre and breathe forth my thoughts in harmony of numbers. This afternoon while on my way to visit my master, I exulted to be a recipient of the bounty of Ceres. The goddess is due all praise, I thought, for the munificence she bestows on us in the autumn. With these sentiments in mind, I dedicated to her the following lines; which I will sing for you:

## A TRIBUTE TO CERES

## I.

When Ceres in the autumn days,  
Brings gifts of grain and wine,  
And wheat and corn and yellow maize  
And products of the vine,

Once more I view her statue crown'd,  
Her form in sheaves arrayed;  
Once more I see on sacred ground,  
Her votive offerings laid.

Once more through all the sylvan land,  
The golden harvest smiles;  
Once more the goddess waves her hand,  
Through all the Grecian isles.

On heights where dwelt the mountain goat,  
Where shaggy satyrs ran;  
Where some lone shepherd raised his note,  
To pipe the songs of Pan,

And where the Ancient Glory fades,  
 Her marble altars glare;  
 And Hellas' dames and Hellas' maids,  
 Her worship still declare.

## II.

What days of rest and peace prevail!  
 What care the time relieves,  
 When Ceres over hill and dale  
 Her magic curtain weaves;

A curtain of the mists of dawn,  
 Whose web the goddess fills  
 With clinging lights and shadows drawn,  
 From Grecian mounts and hills.

Oh! time of vision and of dream,  
 What beauteous forms unveil!  
 What fancies teem; what strange lights gleam  
 What shining vapors sail!

'Tis then the nights enchantment bring,  
 For great Orion sweeps,  
 A mighty and imperious king,  
 Across the sapphire deeps.

There princely cohorts guard his throne,  
 And on the stellar way,  
 Obesiance make from realms unknown,  
 And equal homage pay.

All night the jewell'd hosts traverse,  
 The star bespangl'd plain,  
 And at the break of morn immerse  
 Their bright swords in the main.

For now the dawn hath conquer'd night  
And Phorphor's lustre pales,  
Half hidden in the purple light,  
Which Ida's mount unveils.

Behold the day her splendor lifts!  
The shepherd sounds his flute;  
In praise of Ceres and her gifts,  
I strike my tuneful lute,

And make the quiv'ring cords prolong,  
Their joyful melody;  
Until I hear her votaries song,  
Still echo back to me.

As the last note died away, Alexis lowered his lyre and looked into the faces of his listeners, as if for an expression of approval.

"You are," said Anthony, "a sweet singer, and have paid in your glowing lines, a very splendid tribute to the goddess Ceres for her gifts. The autumn, with its glorious tints and fruitful fields has inspired your muse to this noble effort. But tell me more of your home in Greece, or Hellas, as you prefer to call it?"

"That I cannot," replied the young Adonis. "Our venerable master will inform you on these points if you so desire it. As I make my visits very short, I do not care to take up the time with minor details. My life is one harmonious song, and to song, I offer up myself. I do not descend to common-places. Were I to do so, I would incur suffering, and that is not required of me now. In my present state I experience only the joy of living. And when true glorious life leaps in the veins, I cease to be a man of clay and

claim my relationship with the gods. In my beloved Hellas, my ancestors of Old proved to the world that they had the Divine Ichor in their veins. While their country was small, yet their hearts were large, and the fame of the philosophers and poets of Hellas survive down to the present day. It is a law that whosoever possesses beauty in his soul, can never die; and so I point with pride to the illustrious line of my predecessors from Homer to Anacreon. Their fame can never die as long as the world has a memory. The universe is more beautiful because of the truths to which their lives gave expression. Even now on the exalted planes where they are at present functioning, souls here on earth who are worthy of claiming kinship with them, are sometimes allowed to get in touch with their vibrations, and thereby receive pearls of truth, adorned in the most beautiful language. Now as my visit is short and I must confine myself to the work in hand, I appear before you in the character of a lyric poet only. An actor who plays in tragedy, if given encouragement, does not reappear before the audience in a comedy scene. Nay, more, if called before the footlights he must wear a grave expression, for a smile at such time would be out of place and ruin his work. Likewise I, in the character of a lyric poet, if commended for my effort, can only express my gratitude by the recitation of another of my effusions; after which I will take my leave."

"Desire on the part of the poet, is to make the world more beautiful and the truth more loved. If he would scale Parnassian heights, he must himself, first of all, be a lover of the true, the beautiful and the good. If, with this end in view, he constantly aspires beyond the illusive veil, that shuts him in, as a prisoner in the material world, he will finally pierce

that veil and bring from a higher world visions of great beauty, This, the great masters of every Art have always done and are ever striving to do. In the short lyric which I will now recite, you will observe the height, and a height sublime it is, to which the real poet ever aspires. Then striking the strings of his beautiful instrument, Alexis awoke such echoes that it seemed as if even the trees and stones would be affected by the wonderful melody, With form erect, and head slightly thrown back, he reminded one of the Greek rhapsodists of Old, As the plaintive melody lulled his listeners into a state of receptivity, he began to sing the following lines, to

#### THE POET'S ORISON.

When thrust into the world's mad throng,  
I lose the power to sing,  
And mount the dizzy heights of song  
On Pegasean wing,

One only solace there remains,  
My lost joy to restore;  
One means to break the tyrant's chains,  
And feel the pain no more.

In some deep grove's sequester'd shade,  
I'll seek a fairy bower,  
And there await the muse's aid,  
That brings the raptured hour.

Beneath some friendly waving palm,  
Or regal oak or pine;  
I will intone the sacred psalm,  
And court the faithful Nine.

And then the shadows will depart,  
My lost joy will return;  
Again I'll praise the muse's art;  
Again my thought shall burn.

And I will hail the lambent flame  
Illumining my theme,  
And know the source from whence it came,  
And catch the fitful gleam,

That lights the province of the eye,  
From unseen realms afar,  
And sheds a radiance on the sky,  
And scales the farthest star.

Until the Cosmos is made fair,  
By her inspiring word;  
And all creation doth declare  
The Glory of the Lord.

When the poet reached the closing lines of his song, Anthony glanced at Herminio, to note any sign of approval the sage might make, then he turned to look at Alexis, when to his astonishment he found that he had disappeared.

"Good master," he exclaimed, "what has become of the beautiful Alexis? A few seconds ago he chanted the words of his song, and now he has disappeared as quickly as if he had vanished into air."

"My son," replied Herminio, "Alexis visited us in his astral body. When he told you his home was in Greece, he really meant that he lived there now. Of course you inferred that he was here on a personal visit. But that was not the case. The beautiful youth who has won your love and approbation, by his striking figure which discloses a



nobility of soul, far beyond the worldly model, visits me only at rare intervals, Two weeks hence he will again visit us; but on that occasion his band of players will accompany him. The spectacle is for your benefit; being full of beauty and mystery, it will be presented on the night of the full moon. Now let us retrace our steps to the hermitage for the sun is almost set and we do not wish night to overtake us."

On their way to the hut there was very little speech between the two men. After the supper had been disposed of, Anthony took up the Greek copy of the plays of Euripides, while his beloved master remained silent, wrapped in meditation.

On the following morning at the usual hour, Anthony seated himself in the doorway, at the feet of Herminio, for his daily lesson. The relationship between teacher and pupil was so well understood, that verbal orders on the part of Herminio were not necessary.

"In your first lesson yesterday," began the sage, "I gave you an outline of the phenomena in my own personal case at the time of my Awakening into Life. Now each soul has a different experience in this regard; and although I know by my higher powers every super-physical incident through which you have gone, yet I wish to hear in your own language the first intimation of your Awakening."

"It was during the last year of my married life," replied Anthony, "that I began to feel what you term, the awakening. A burning desire for knowledge seized me and gave me no rest day or night. I began to lose interest in all mundane affairs. While I loved my wife and child devotedly, yet there were times when even in their society, this longing for knowledge became so strong, that I was totally oblivious to my surroundings, I seemed to have drifted

away from the physical world. One night I dreamed a most divine dream, I was standing in a meadow, the grass in the place coming almost within half the distance to my knees. Suddenly, on turning to the left, I beheld a young man of marvellous beauty, standing very near to me. He was white as the driven snow, his entire body looking like a marble statue endowed with life. His hair, his eyes and even his eyelashes and eyebrows, were white as wool. Gazing at him in reverential awe, I asked him if he was Antinous of Rome, for his clear cut features and curly hair, seemed to remind me of him, At my question he smiled and said, "Yes, Come, follow me." Then he extended his hand, which I clasped in mine and we seemed to sweep along over the ground. I cannot describe the expansion of consciousness that took place within me in the presence of this marvellous Being. It seemed my soul had expanded to unusual limits and I felt such a joy and exultation, that human language fails utterly to describe. Finally we reached a large building and entered what seemed to be a large school room. Here he looked over some records, which he took from a little receptacle in the wall. But he gave them only a cursory examination, for all the while he kept his gaze almost steadily fixed on me. Then I fell at his feet and clasping him by the knees, implored him to let me abide with him and begged him to give me knowledge. Knowledge, I cried. Give me knowledge; it is the one boon I crave. Then smiling down at me benignantly, he raised his right hand and pointing with index finger to the horizon, said majestically: 'Nay. Not yet. You must return, for yonder are the beginnings of Life.' Then I looked where he bade me go. It was on the far horizon,

streaked with clouds of gray. "Thither must you return," he said, "'ere knowledge be given you.' Then suddenly I was awakened as if by the jingle of sleigh bells; and for some minutes after this remarkable dream, the sound of bells could be plainly heard, until it grew fainter and fainter, and finally ceased altogether."

"My son," said Herminio, as he lovingly stroked the black locks of his pupil, this was not a dream. The young Antinous, whom you met on this, the occasion of your first awakening, lives in Rome to-day. He is not the Antinous of Old Rome, who drowned himself in a fountain because he feared old age and dreaded its coming, lest it might mar his beauty. No! This young man is of a different type. He is your astral conductor. The Great Ones of earth who watch over humanity, appointed him to be your guardian on the astral. Now man has seven bodies, corresponding to the seven planes of Nature. But for the present we will confine ourselves to the astral plane only—the one above the physical. When you longed for knowledge so ardently, you purified the matter of the physical body and increased its rate of vibration. At the same time these aspirations brought your astral body into definite form, and furnished it with organs, so that your consciousness could use it as a vehicle in the astral world. Then your master, observing that it was time to awaken you on the astral, chose this youth Antinous, who lives in the Eternal City to be your guide. He chose the time and the hour. It was all left to him. Then at the propitious moment, he left his physical envelope, causing you to do the same. By a law of similarity you met on the astral, and felt that exquisite joy that always accompanies an expansion of consciousness when the soul functions in its astral vehicle.

During this time, your physical body remained in your bed; your heart action was slow and your breathing hardly audible. The physical forces holding your body, lowered its every function, until you were ready to return to it. When you asked your guide for knowledge, he referred you to a far away horizon, streaked with clouds of gray. Now every color on the astral has a deep significance. Gray betokens melancholy, fear and depression. Therefore when he pointed to the gray horizon, and told you that yonder were the beginnings of life, and that you must return 'ere you could be given knowledge, he was sending you back to the physical world—that place of woe and trial and sorrow, that was to be your school—the place where you would be disciplined before you could be admitted to that august company of the Higher Ones who would feed your soul on the Divine manna.”

“For in this plane of sorrow we must overcome and transmute all our emotions. The poor human heart must there be crucified on the Cross of Matter. The heart of the Christ is often pictured as being pierced with swords. So must every heart at some time in its evolution meet a like Gethsemene.”

For a long time Anthony was silent. He had suffered and endured his agony, in that place of Gethsemene, called the physical world. He had died to that world and now he felt as one who had overcome the limitations of the physical life, and entered on his heavenly heritage.

“And good master, what of the bells, whose sweet silver-like sounds pierced the hollow of my ears, after I awoke from my wonderful dream?”

"They are what are called, the 'astral bells,' " replied the sage. "Your conductor Antinous, brought certain vibrations into play, by sending you strong loving thoughts along the astral currents the moment that you returned to your physical body. This was to impress on your mind, that your marvellous experience was more than a dream. Furthermore, the astral bells act as a signal, when any important matter is to be decided, or an important step is to be taken by the neophyte. Being a disciple under their care, many times will you hear the tinkling of the bells, when some momentous question awaits your decision. It is their way of helping and warning you. No doubt you have heard them at intervals after your awakening."

"Yes, I am familiar with their sweet sounds. Often have their tiny silver echoes cheered and consoled me when my heart was faint," replied the young man.

"Is it not beautiful to think how intelligence may be conveyed by such super-physical means?" asked the sage.

"Yes, and after all, it is not miraculous."

"I am so glad you have grasped that fact," said Herminio. "In the physical world we know that impulses sent forth by the wireless telegraph are conveyed by the ether. But etheric matter cannot convey thought. That is done by the next highest medium, the astral currents acting on the astral plane."

"That indeed is a revelation to me," replied Anthony. "Your explanation makes it very clear."

"It is clear to you," smilingly said the sage, "because you have functioned on that plane. Had you not risen to the level of astral experience, no elucidation however lengthy and learned, could have

been convincing to you. From your stage in evolution, you know—have positive knowledge—that to the ordinary physical man, the astral is a sealed book."

"Yes, for only the humble and pure in heart can break the seals and glean wisdom from the mystic symbols contained therein," said Anthony.

"How I love the words of knowledge that now fall from your lips," rejoined the seer. "Seven years ago, when you visited these regions on your honeymoon, you could not have uttered such sentiments. Then you were happy in a physical way only. Since that time your longings after truth and your intense desire to know more of the world mystery, accompanied by a purity of heart, brought you illumination. Then were you given power to lift the veil and project your vision and consciousness in the next highest department of Nature, called the Astral world. In your particular case, your guide showed caution, in awakening you on the inner plane, during sleep. Some times the other method is chosen and the subject does not leave his physical body at all. I refer to my own case. In these instances the subject attains to astral vision. But even then, a protection is thrown around the embryo seer; so that the strain of the awakening might not be too great. Now my first vision was a portion of starlit sky, and bands of white fleecy clouds. I did not know the phenomena was super-physical, until the light which fell from my hands, leaving me in the darkness, proved beyond any doubt, that I had beheld a vision. For the scene reappeared on the drawn curtain and on both sides of the closed window. I thought at first I was looking out of the window at the star groups in the North. Now these methods are used by our astral

conductors, not only to prove to us that we have been shown super-sensuous realities, but to lessen fear as well.

"Had you been taken out of your physical body in full waking consciousness, the strain would have been too great, and the probability is, you would have died from fear, and this would have defeated the very end which the masters had in view. For in your second 'dream' as you called it, although it, also was not a dream; you climbed the mountain of knowledge, where you were told you could not enter the marvellous edifice that crowned its summit, until you had made the Unity with the Self. Now let me hear you relate this, your second awakening on the astral, in your own language; for there is nothing that gives a teacher greater joy than to hear his pupil relate in his own words, the ascending stages of his Awakening into Life."

"I remember every detail of these wonderful experiences so vividly," responded Anthony, "that it seems they have been branded in my memory with a searing iron. On the particular night when this event occurred, I was sleeping with my little boy. Worn out by a heavy day's work in the class room, I fell asleep early. Then began a most significant dream. I was standing alone at the base of a high mountain. The summit was so clearly outlined against the blue sky of an ideal summer day, that some unseen force impelled me to climb toward it. But my feet were bare and the way was steep and perilous. Yet undaunted by the difficulties, I began the ascent.

"Clutching the short grass and shrubs I struggled on, till the blood began to ooze from my unprotected feet and hands. Then the thorns and underbrush tore my raiment to tatters, until finally

I stood naked under the fierce rays of the burning sun. But my courage seemed super-human. I must reach the goal; so on and on I struggled, the ruddy drops of blood marking every step of the way. Then hunger and burning thirst seized me, and I almost swooned from the heat of the pitiless sun, shining in a brazen sky. But I was gaining the coveted goal. One more mighty effort, and victory would be mine. As I started to make the final attempt, I felt a severe pain in the region of the heart; on looking down I observed that that part of my body directly over my heart, was transparent, so that I could see my heart distinctly, and from it the blood was oozing slowly, drop by drop; the ruddy globules coming through my body, trickled down my limbs, until they reached my feet and stained the ground, so that I was walking in the blood that oozed from my heart.

"I can never forget that agonizing part of my dream. At times I thought I must give up the effort, my strength being too far gone. But in spite of all the suffering, I struggled on. When at last, with one final effort, I reached the summit, I gave a shout of joy. For there on the very top of the mountain, was a marble temple of great beauty, white as the Arctic snow. Along its side flowed a stream of crystal water in which I bathed my bleeding hands and feet. Then suddenly my wounds were healed and even the marks and bruises disappeared and my whole body became white as the temple itself. Refreshed by the magical properties of this living water, I made bold to approach the temple. But I could not enter for the portals were closed. Then as I drew nearer I noticed a marble tablet, partly hidden behind the Ionian columns which bore the following inscription in Greek characters:



**"The Temple of Knowledge. Know all ye who would enter the portals of this sacred Temple, that your hearts must be bled from impure desire, and you must successfully pass the super-human ordeal of making the Unity with the Self."**

**"Then I awoke from my dream, and clasped around my neck, felt the arms of my little boy Angelo."**

**"My son," said Herminio, when Anthony had concluded his narrative, "your ascent up this mountain was symbolical of the pain and anguish of heart you were to endure in the physical world on your way toward Reality. The blood that flowed from your heart, symbolized the overcoming of your emotions, that must be transmuted into higher spiritual forces before you could pass the ordeal of making the Unity with Self. Now this ordeal of making the Unity with Self is nothing less than the surrendering of your own will, to the Will of God. You are a part of His life and in making His Will, your will, you not only reach to a vision of the Truth, but you make happiness for yourself and glorify Him. But alas, how few in the present age, co-operate with His holy will and become children of Light. Instead of submitting themselves to the Divine promptings, it is their desire to overcome them. They set their puny wills against the majesty of Divinity. They would be gods themselves. The creature would rule the Creator. This course leads to distrust and doubt and anchors the deluded soul to the physical plane. To the higher planes of love and faith and knowledge, they can never reach, because they have failed to make that Unity with the Self—the surrendering of their personal will, to the Will of the Creator.**

**"Now although grace was given you, by which you were enabled to make this Unity with the Self,**

at the same time the difficulty of the great feat, was made most clear to you. In this, there was also hidden a Divine purpose, for the time will come when you must instruct and encourage others who are about to make this Unity with the Self. Being familiar with the agony of the Great Trial, you are fitted not only to advise, but also to console them on their perilous journey toward Reality."

"Now in your case," continued the seer, "the price you were required to pay, to make this Unity with the Self, was the separation from your wife and child, and your worldly possessions. Even your relatives and friends were taken from you. You remained alone with God, the Author of your Being. All else had gone. Now this very condition was necessary in order that you might make the Unity with the Self. At first you railed at what you thought to be a cruel Fate. From the standpoint of the world, you were a failure. But it was the form of your life only, that failed, and not the life itself. Remember that well. The form of the life, can fail, but not the life. After the destruction of Messina, you wandered into the country bereft of reason, till you came to the home of the shepherd. This was no accident. It, too, was a part of the Divine plan. Under the humble roof of this unlettered man, you learned a most salutary lesson. That is, that God rejoices in the love of a contrite heart and gives it perfect peace. The old shepherd had been a criminal and thief, in his youth and early manhood. In later years he gave heed to the Divine promptings. Obeying the still small voice of the conscience, he united his will to the Will of the Creator, and thus attained to the Unity with the Self."

"During the first months of your stay with him, you envied him his happiness. Why, you thought, should this rude, uncultured man of the hills, once a hunted outlaw, tell me of the mysteries of God. On a certain night he upbraided you for your lack of faith and brought you to shame. Then you clearly saw for the first time, that human knowledge alone could never bring the heart to God, and that the soul who puts its trust therein, would never reach to the Divine felicity."

As Herminio finished speaking, he looked at his pupil as if for a reply, but Anthony, amazed at the marvellous intuition of the seer, remained silent.

"Come," he said finally, as he realized the depth of thought into which he had plunged his pupil, "tell me of the next religious experience through which you passed on the way to your final spiritual awakening."

"It was on a certain morning," replied Anthony, "when we were about to start for the place of pasturage, that the shepherd drew from beneath his coat, a little book, which he told me a stranger, passing through the fields, had given him the day previously. 'I will give you the book,' he said, 'for I cannot read. Possibly it may do you some good.'"

"The little volume," continued Anthony, "was that treasury of the Christian faith, 'The Imitation of Christ,' by Thomas à Kempis. The little book and the Saint Anthony medal, left me by my dying mother, are now my sole possessions. Then going to the little book shelf where Herminio kept his library, he picked up the little volume, and placed it in the hands of the seer."

"Although they are your sole possessions, yet they are all that you need, for they brought you

into life. And the medal, have you worn it always?" asked the seer.

"Yes, I have," and drawing from beneath his clothing, the medal, he showed it to the old man. "I have always worn it," he continued. "It has been a potent talisman; for I believe it rescued me from despair. At times during my despondent moments, I have clutched it so firmly in my palm, that its sharp sides cut into the flesh and caused me to cry out in pain."

"Yes, and yet through its efficacy, combined with the splendid treasures I have found in 'The Imitation,' I took up courage and aspired and longed for Reality. That ultimate Goal, for which every true penitent so ardently longs. Then one night, worn out by grief and patient suffering, I threw myself on my wretched bed, and repeating aloud the opening line of the 'De Profundis'; 'Out of the Depths, I have cried to Thee, O Lord hear my voice!' I fell into a troubled sleep. Then I dreamed I was again with you here in Switzerland and was gleaning knowledge from the words that fell from your lips. Looking out of the hermitage I saw the wild goats sporting around the eagle's nests, and heard the echoes of splashing water as it fell from the hidden cascades in the mountains. I was so happy to be once more in your company, that I fairly exulted in the joy of Being. Then I suddenly awoke from my dream and beheld a white light directly above my bed near the ceiling and knew I was to be accorded a vision. Slowly the light faded, to reappear the second and third time. Then after its final disappearance, there gleamed in its place a perfectly formed anchor. It was of a deep violet color. Its length was about nine inches with a proportionate width, making a most beautiful figure. For five or

six seconds it remained in manifestation, pulsating and throbbing like a thing of life, then it slowly faded away into the darkness."

"And what were your thoughts, and what did you do, when the vision disappeared?" asked the seer with a smile.

"I raised my clasped hands to heaven and thanked God for the vision and its hopeful symbol; with streaming eyes and a heart full of gratitude, I knew some higher intelligence was protecting me and giving me a promise of hope. There was still something for which to live. For I knew the Great Power, which was mindful of me, would give me the right disposition to conquer every obstacle and yet make a success of my life. But of the origin of the beautiful vision, I know nothing and now beg you to explain it to me."

"From the time that you made your call for knowledge," replied the seer, "your guide Antinous, constantly watched over your life and actions. He knew your secret thoughts, for they were a part of his consciousness. When you made your first sincere aspirations, he met you on the astral while your body slept, and had you experience that expanded form of consciousness, which the soul undergoes when functioning in its astral vehicle. Then it was at his command, that you climbed the symbolical mountain of knowledge, amid the many perils and dangers that beset your way, to find when you reached the summit, you were denied entrance to the temple until you had passed successfully the ordeal of making the Unity with Self. Again, he sent you back to the physical world, that sad place of human experience, symbolized by a far away horizon, streaked with clouds of gray. Then came the trial. Your loved ones were taken from you.

All that the physical world held dear to you—your love, your affections—your wealth, at one fell stroke shared alike the common doom. For two long years you led the life of a madman and pauper. You were treading your way to the Temple of Knowledge, but Oh! the agony and bitter anguish of the journey! How often your courage failed; for you walked in the blood that oozed from the heart. When at length it seemed you could suffer no longer, the great truths in 'The Imitation' by Thomas à Kempis, were flashed into your consciousness. There you read, 'That occasions make not a man fail, but they show what the man is.' Also, 'That he who overcometh, would be given to eat of the Tree of Life.' Now this overcoming is the very process to which you had been subjected. You were transmuting your emotions into spiritual forces. You were becoming Christ-like. The swords of sorrow had pierced that center of emotion—the human heart. It had given up the last drop of its blood. The ordeal was consummated; and the spirit of Thomas à Kempis, reaching out over the centuries, enabled you to make that supreme achievement—the Unity with the Self."

"Then you became calm and confident. Despair gave way to hope, and fear to courage. As soon as your guide Antinous sensed this new condition in your consciousness, he bided his time a little longer. Then on that particular night he caused you to dream of me. Knowing the exact moment when you would awaken from your dream, he projected to you a loving thought of hope. Since the astral currents are the conductors of thought, the matter of the astral plane is being continually wrought into form, by the thought-waves impinged on it by the thought of man; each thought having its particular

form, while the color depends upon the rate of vibration. Thus the loving thought sent out to you by Antinous from the city of Rome, reached you instantly in far away Sicily, and molded the matter of the astral plane within the field of your astral vision into the form of an anchor, symbolical of the idea which your guide intended to convey. He accompanied this thought with ardent love; thus, the rate of vibration was raised to that particular point, making the color a deep violet—the love color. It was no wonder that you thanked God for so beautiful a manifestation of his love and Providence; for here indeed, was ocular proof that a higher intelligence than ordinary man somewhere in the universe, was sending you love and hope. You must remember that each thought has its particular form. Whenever the thought of hope is projected by one human being to another, the plastic matter of the astral plane is at once molded into the form of an anchor, and whoever possesses the gift of astral vision, can clearly see this beautiful phenomenon.”

“So there is a symbology to the astral plane; and whosoever possesses the key to the symbols, can interpret its meaning and read therein,” interrupted Anthony.

“Yes, but it requires time, patience and practice. In the first place, he who would read the secrets in this department of Nature, must first of all, have astral vision; and this great boon is only given to those who have become worthy of it by living an unselfish life, coupled with humility and great purity of heart; so that the number of persons today in the world who have attained this higher vision, is comparatively few.”

“But will the time ever come when humanity as a whole, be given this higher vision?” asked Anthony.

"Yes," replied the seer, "for it is the heritage of the Race. In the far away future, the humanity of the period, will with few exceptions, have attained to astral vision. In that golden epoch of the Future, the Races of this globe, realizing the mighty power for good they have generated by uniting their will to the Universal Mind—knowing that a purity of life reveals higher planes of Being, will have one ambition only—that of becoming spiritual minded. Then indeed, Love will transform the world. The present social order will have passed away. For where Love reigns, greed and lust depart. In that distant time, Humanity will have entered into a new cycle. The heart of man having been purified, will no longer crave after the perishing things of a material world. Then the customs and the social order will change; for society is only an expression of the consciousness of the Race. The social order is an index, whereby one may gauge the condition of the heart of man. The purer the heart, the higher and more just the social order."

"From the general trend of our converse, I trust you will not think me presumptuous if I ask if there be worlds now existing, that bear humanities such as you have described?" inquired the anxious Anthony.

"Yes, my son, there are such worlds," replied the seer. "On the planet Venus, our sister globe, there reigns a glorified humanity. The souls on Venus have become Christ-like. To them the Tree of Life, is an ever-present reality, and they do not have to search their Scriptures to find it in parable and allegory."

"Would you not tell me more of those glorious Beings, in their happy Venus world?"



"No. I should not have touched on it at all," rejoined the sage." But sometimes even a master, oversteps the bounds of prudence, and gives out truths, he is forbidden to utter. So over this higher knowledge I will now draw the veil, Let us go back to the events that happened to you shortly after Antinous promised you hope through the vision of the violet anchor. Tell me from your own lips, what you did on the days immediately following the vision and what was your disposition. And finally, in what kind of a spirit you received the instructions in sleep, that prompted you to come to Switzerland to find and reside with me, your friend and master?"

"For several days after the remarkable occurrence, I talked very little to the shepherd; instead I busied myself in reading "The Imitation", wherein I found pearls of great price. But all the while I knew I must in a very short time go forth into the world; for my benefactor, kind as he was, could not afford to keep me always with him. But I disliked the idea of taking up the burden of life again in the world, and I shuddered at the thought of again coming in contact with it."

"It was at this time that I began to see additional phenomena through the higher vision. On retiring at night, I noticed that the ceiling and walls of my room, were filled with tiny points of fire. Directly over my head there burned a golden colored star, somewhat larger than the other points of light with which my room was filled, At first these points of light were stationery, but at the end of several weeks they began to move across my field of vision, sometimes in straight lines and sometimes in circles. Now, the star which shone overhead, was always stationery; that is, so long as I remained at rest.

But one night, having occasion to leave my bed, I noticed that this particular point of golden light, followed me about wherever I moved. Now, the other points of fire, seemed to move independently; they would meet and coalesce, separate and disappear, while new ones would constantly form in other parts of the ceiling, tracing their fiery lines and circles against the background of darkness. But this particular star shaped point, seemed to shine for me alone. It was not attracted and repelled by the others, but acted as it were a law unto itself. On certain nights, this astral display, as you no doubt would term it, was less brilliant than at other times, and but a few of the lights would be in evidence; but this golden colored star never failed to shed its beams on me. I grew to love it. It seemed a mute friend and companion; never leaving my side. On my way to Switzerland, I recalled the joy I felt, when on my first night on the steamer, the faithful star still held its shining place overhead, as if to guard and console me with its cheering rays. Every night thereafter, and even until now, this friendly sentinel still sheds its golden beams upon me. Good master, what is the office of this nightly watcher, and will it always continue to cheer me with its beauteous rays?"

"My son," thoughtfully answered the seer, "This is what is called in occultism, the 'Star of Initiation,' You have been initiated into the lesser mysteries of life. Being initiated, you became a part of your master's consciousness. You are always in his thought, for you have become a part of him. Now this point of light which takes the place of a star, is the projection of your master's thought. He thinks of you as being loyal, steadfast and enduring. His thought, when impinged on the astral, takes the

form of a star; for are not the stars emblems of Eternity? We speak of the 'everlasting stars.' Is it not meet therefore, that the master's constant thought of his pupil, should take on this beautiful form?"

"Now, this 'Star of Initiation' will continue to shine over you throughout your entire future. It will never desert you; for your consciousness having been united, to that of your master's, you are ever present in his thought. Now the other points of light are also projections. You call them points of fire. You are quite right in so naming them. I would call them sparks, or little tips of flame, that play hide and seek in the shadows. Other initiates in other parts of the world, through their inner faculties, have sensed your presence in their thought life. They rejoice to know that another soul has awakened into Being. But since you are not under their personal direction, their thought of you is not continuous; so that when their thought is withdrawn, certain points of fire disappear, that represent their occasional thought. Then other noble souls in some remote part of the world, send you their thoughts, and other tips of flame appear in the field of your astral vision. It is this interplay of thought force, sent you at random, that results in the beautiful phenomena you witness nightly and fills the ceiling and walls of your room with flaming jewels."

"What a marvel," exclaimed Anthony. "I feel as though I had just begun to live."

"Yes," rejoined the seer. "When with the higher vision we pierce the veil and read the first secrets of Creation, we really begin to exult in the joy of Being. Knowing that greater secrets will be revealed to us as our consciousness unfolds, we then

trust those mighty Powers who are instruments of the heavenly Father. For when a man reaches this stage of unfoldment, he is speaking from a physical point of view, directed by invisible forces that shape his destiny. Now tell me, in what kind of a spirit you received the instructions in sleep, that sent you to me."

"After the vision of the anchor and the beginning of the nightly astral display of the points of light," replied Anthony, "I felt that these higher forces would by some occult process advise me what I was to do. In this I was correct, and after the instructions were given, I obeyed them implicitly, never doubting for a moment the wisdom of the great intelligence that was in this way directing me."

Then the young pupil related to his master, the appearance of the three hands while he was in the super-sensuous condition. How he met the two men a few days later, having hands which were exact duplicates of those he had seen in the astral; lastly, how the shepherd, the owner of the third hand, had helped him on his way by furnishing him gold to defray the expenses of his journey.

When he finished his narrative, he asked Herminio for an explanation of the phenomena.

"When you longed for knowledge," replied the sage, "as to the future course you should pursue in the world, Antinous, your astral conductor, sensed your condition. Knowing through a higher means, which I will explain to you later, that two travellers would pass by the home of the shepherd in a few days and converse with you, he put you on the astral during sleep. After you had framed the mental question as to what course you were to follow, he projected a strong thought image of the hand of the first traveller, on the third finger of

which was worn a plain band silver ring. Through your astral vision you observed this minutely. Then it disappeared. A second time Antinous impinged his thought on the astral, and the strength of his thought moulded the astral matter into the form of another hand—not a heavy wide hand like the first, but the hand of a leisurely gentleman, the fingers well formed, the palm narrow and on the third finger a gold ring set with two golden hearts. After this, by the same process, a third hand was seen. A hand with twisted, knotted fingers, the thumb deformed. You recognized it as the hand of the shepherd. Then you awakened, or came back to your physical body. You knew your question had been answered. You did not wonder at the marvellous way in which it had been done. You had ceased to wonder. Although treading the first steps that lead to the Temple of Knowledge you waited patiently, trusting implicitly the higher Powers that were now guiding your life and actions. The day following a traveller passed on the road going to Palermo. He learned your history and took a deep interest in your past. He advised you to go to Switzerland in the capacity of a private teacher. Then as he leaned against a tree as if to rest, his left hand was fully exposed. You noted it to be the first hand you had seen in the astral. There was the wide, coarse palm, and on the third finger, the plain band silver ring.

“The next day a certain traveller stopped in the road opposite the hut. After tying his horse, he came into the yard and made inquiry if he was on the right road for Taormina. He was a refined gentleman. You asked him into the hermitage. You found him to be a teacher from the university of Paris. This common tie of occupation brought both of you to very friendly terms. He also learned your

history. Then like the first traveller, he advised you to go to Switzerland in the near future—told you not to delay. Then he incidentally remarked that he had sprained his wrist a few days previously, and rested his hand lightly on the table. You saw it to be a duplicate of the second hand that appeared to you in the astral. A well formed hand. The fingers tapering—the palm narrow. On the third finger the gold ring, set with two golden hearts.

“After some further converse, he took his leave; but before saying goodbye, he again urged you to go on to Switzerland, where your future awaited you.”

“Now, what you saw in the astral, had been proved in the physical. There yet remained the third hand to be accounted for. You knew this was the hand of the shepherd. He, too, had a part to play. On learning of your intention to go to Switzerland, he felt happy at your decision, but he knew nothing as to how this decision had been brought about. That was well. Then he furnished you with gold for the journey and accompanied you as far as Messina. After reaching Bergun, you felt restless and uneasy and did not feel like taking up the work of a teacher. One afternoon during your rambles, you came upon the path that lead to this hermitage. Suddenly the way seemed familiar, for you recognized it as the very path along which you moved in the astral, where the mysterious hands had been seen by you through the higher vision. Then you saw my figure in the doorway, and knew that the real purpose of your return to Switzerland, was to bring you to the feet of Herminio, the Seer.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### The Astral Players.

The Poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

—Midsummer Night's Dream.

Two weeks had passed since the sage and his pupil had wandered over the hills, when on that October afternoon, they had met the beautiful Alexis, and listened to his soul stirring songs accompanied by the sweet notes of his silver lyre. It was the night of the full moon—the night on which Herminio had promised his pupil, that Alexis would present a play for his benefit—a play that was to be full of beauty and mystery.

"Come," said the sage, as he took Anthony by the arm, and led him from the inclosure of the hermitage into the grove, "we will walk over the hills until the moon is fully risen, when our beloved youth, Alexis, will meet us with his band of astral players."

As the two men set out of the inclosure, the moon touching the horizon, flooded the East with light. For more than an hour the sage and his pupil walked on, arm in arm. Engaged in rich converse, they seemed oblivious to all the natural beauty that

was everywhere spread around them. At last coming into an open space before a large oak, they seated themselves on a little knoll, to rest.

"It is under that oak tree," said Herminio, "that Alexis and his band of players will appear. Keep your attention fixed on the topmost branches of the tree, and your patience will soon be rewarded by a phenomenon of wondrous beauty."

The sage had scarcely finished speaking, when a globe of green colored light appeared on the tree top. For a moment only, it remained stationary; then it dropped slowly through the branches, and as it neared the ground, it broke into parts and assumed the shape of long separate ribbons of light, which united, and on touching the ground, assumed human form, and Alexis, the beautiful youth, clad in a green raiment, stepped forth from under the tree, bearing his silver lyre in his upraised hand.

"Most gracious master and worthy friend Anthony, I greet you," he said, as he advanced toward them. Then striking a few notes on his lyre, he added: "My players will soon be here and I will make them known to you as they arrive."

Then he retraced his steps and stood under the tree, while a golden globe of light descended through the branches. On nearing the ground, it broke apart as the green globe had done and assumed the form of an elderly man, clad in a flowing robe of yellow. In his right hand he carried a telescope.

"Welcome Simonides," said Alexis, as he extended his hand. Then leading him forward he continued: "This is Simonides, the astronomer, who does his work well. Simonides, greet our friend Anthony, who has recently come into life."

As Simonides bowed to Anthony, a red globe followed by a deep violet, fell slowly through the



branches. From the separated parts, two female figures were formed. The first of striking beauty, clothed in red, with a girdle of flashing jewels around the waist. On her head she wore a crown of gold studded with precious stones. The second figure was smaller in stature than the first. Her violet robe hanging loosely about her supple form. In her right hand she carried a reed instrument, through which she occasionally breathed a few plaintive notes.

At a sign from Alexis, the two women advanced and were introduced as Cleo, an enchantress, and Isolde, a shepherdess.

"Behold the contrast between these two," said Alexis. "Cleo bears in her right hand, a golden crozier, an emblem of power, but it is physical power only that she wields. Isolde, the gentle shepherdess, a lover of nature, is clothed in violet—the love color. She bears a reed—emblem of peace and happiness."

As he finished speaking, another globe, in color a pale blue, fell slowly through the branches of the oak. After going through the same process, as the other globes before it, there stepped forth an aged man, with a long white beard.

"Behold Umenes, the Anchorite, a most devout soul. He is dressed in blue raiment—the devotional color."

While Anthony marvelled at the appearance of these characters in their astral bodies, a white globe of light shone out above the tree top. It swayed slowly to the right and left before resting on the branches as if it would attract special attention. Then slowly dropping down among the autumn leaves, it broke apart, but not into ribbons. Instead, it broke up into a number of small white globes,

which on uniting, formed into a male body of snowy whiteness. There was no mistaking that noble form, that seemed cut from living marble. It was Antinous, his astral conductor.

"Have no fear," said Herminio, as he noticed his pupil was somewhat agitated; "Antinous is one of the players."

Before Anthony could reply, Umenes, the Anchorite, and the lovely Antinous, had come forward and joined the others. Then Alexis, gazing dreamily at the increasing moon, allowed his fingers to stray caressingly for some moments among the strings of his silver lyre. For some time he remained motionless; soon recovering from his reverie, he turned his gaze toward his listeners, and with his glorious head slightly thrown back, commenced to sing:

Most gracious Master! Kindest friend!  
Your benison bestow,  
On One whom airy forms attend,  
And mute obeisance show.

Not oft the Cosmic Powers ordain  
This Spectacle to Be;  
Not oft thy servant's glorious train,  
Awaken'd souls may see!

But when the sun, his annual round,  
Loops seven times earth and air,  
Some worthy souls my forms surround,  
Their Wisdom to declare.

And only when the moonbeams glance,  
Is set the fairy scene;  
Where mystics pray and wantons dance,  
In ambient air serene.

Then Worlds of Fancy open wide,  
And beauteous forms unveil;  
And thoughts that in the shadows hide,  
On quiv'ring starbeams sail!

The bat that hails the rising moon,  
The firefly in the dell,  
The gnome upon the sandy dune,  
The monk in desert cell,

All hail with joy the silver light,  
That Cynthia sheds afar;  
For now the blessèd hallow'd night,  
Comes forth in spangl'd car.

Star crown'd! she rides the starry heights,  
And with a watchful eye,  
Observes the saint's and sinner's rites—  
The lover's plaintive sigh.

So I invoke her wondrous boon,  
Here 'neath this oaken tree;  
Her subtle spell beneath this moon,  
Commends my friends to thee.

The prelude completed, Alexis once more fixed his gaze on the rising moon. Again he indulged in a short reverie. After a momentary pause quickly recollecting himself, he drew his noble form up to its full stature, and striking the cords of his beautiful instrument with the skillful touch and force of a master musician, broke forth into the following verse:

"In my beloved land, fair Hellas land,  
The gods oft met in council to decide  
The fate of men and nations. Even so  
I and my band of faithful players meet  
Here 'neath the full grown moon at divers times,  
To speak on matters of such grave import,  
That most concern the growing soul of man.  
Unlike the gods of Old, whose sole desire  
Was to incite the heart of man to war,  
And prey upon his fellows, we are met  
Unto a nobler purpose; for our aims  
Are not to foment strife and bitter hate,  
And pour forth vials of wrath upon the world.  
Instead our work is of so high a kind  
That nature hath endowed us with gifts,  
That to the simple mind of plodding man  
Seem superhuman and miraculous;  
And yet withal, they are but natural,  
The outcome and result of standard aims,  
The fruit of actions of an ordered past.  
In my beloved company appear,  
Men of diverse attainments who will give  
The object of their lives, in their own words.  
Speak up Simonides. Why comest thou  
To our august assemblage?

Simonides:

Most worthy friend and leader, I come here  
In my more subtle body, to convey  
The world-old message to my list'ning peers;  
For while my theme is old, 'tis ever new,  
For I exemplify in my own life  
Ideals and purposes, for which great men  
Have hoped and struggled for through centuries.

**Alexis:**

Then to the point, and waste not idle words  
In flowery language and fine rhetoric.  
Seek not to measure meter or blank verse,  
Nor weigh the number of thy cadences.

**Simonides:**

If I must to the point, then so will I.  
Know then O friends, and thou good Anthony,  
That I have scanned the heavens all my time.  
Behold this telescopic tube I bear  
Doth symbolize my calling in this life.  
For years, I did essay to understand  
The mighty secrets nature did withhold,  
From the material mind of modern man.  
But baffled in my search, I grew morose,  
Till doubt triumphed and canker'd in my soul;  
For years I lived in this despairing mood,  
Until death robbed me of my son and heir;  
Then through my sorrow and my suffering,  
Was I brought into faith. For then I found  
The loss of my child's love, was far more great  
To bring me unto God, than all the orbs  
That mark the boundary of the stellar way.

**Alexis:**

Well said, Simonides. How I exult  
When as a man of science you admit  
That all the heavenly bodies are as naught  
Against the value of a single soul.  
Now let us hear from Cleo. She is fair,  
And lures men on to danger and to death,  
For by her potent art, she kills the soul.  
Speak up Cleo! How came the tenebraes  
To send you here in astral form tonight,

For they well know your sinister designs,  
That you but live to damn the souls of men.

Cleo:

Thou speakest like the Oracle of Old,  
Once famed on Delphi's hills. But I care not  
For thy fine words that bitterly denounce  
My office and my calling. You well know  
Your weight against me in the present world,  
Is likened to a feather 'gainst a mount  
Of hardest granite. Therefore blame me not,  
For I am but a creature of the thought  
That pulses through the erring hearts of men.  
I am their own creation. Should they change  
The current of their thought, I would decay  
And mingle with the primal elements,  
And Cleo's long influence would be gone.  
But I fear no such end in this world age.  
The homage I receive hath made me bold,  
And they indeed are great who can resist,  
The power of enchantment that I wield.

Alexis:

Cleo, thou hast done well, for it is true  
Thou are a product of the thought of man.  
And now dear friends, Isolde will come forth  
And likewise make obeisance unto thee.

Isolde:

I am a simple shepherdess who lives  
Not too far inland from the Aegean sea,  
For when the day is clear, from the high hills,  
I see the wave caps dance in summer air.  
You know from the deep violet I wear,  
That I love nature in her every mood,

In storm as well as sunshine. When a child  
I loved to herd the sheep my father owned.  
At early morn oft have I drove them forth  
'Ere Sol's pearl rays bestreaked the purple East.  
Throughout the day I loved to watch them feed  
And crop the tufts of short nutritious grass,  
That grows so sparingly on mountain soil.  
Then with my reed, I'd breathe forth melodies,  
That broke in echoes on the rugged peaks  
And lulled my spirit into ecstasy.  
As I did then, so do I now. The maid  
Is but a grown up child. She loves the scenes  
So sacred to her memory. Loyal still  
To all that's fair in Nature, she remains  
A shepherdess today, and tends her sheep.

Alexis:

A simple speech I must perforce declare,  
Was uttered by the shepherdess. She speaks  
In language most effective; for it springs  
Direct from her pure heart. Umenes now  
The famous anchorite, must next address  
Our most august assembly.

Umenes:

Good master and kind friends, in me you'll find,  
A man of simple mien, and humble heart,  
Who lives secluded from the changing world,  
In that far country called the isle of Crete;  
There in a peaceful vale surpassing far  
The famous Temple on Thessalian plains,  
Long years ago I built my hermitage,  
And chose the calling of an anchorite.  
For growing weary of the world's deceit,  
And craving peace, I found it could not give,

I fled from men and their ambitious schemes  
And chose the friendship of the Sons of God.  
Behold the pale blue raiment that I wear,  
Doth symbolize devotion in the soul;  
For they who wear this color are devout,  
And spend much time in prayer and orison.  
Some say that we are idlers and vain men,  
Who all our lives but meditate and pray;  
And that an anchorite from duty flees,  
On his retiring to a desert cell.  
But they speak from a knowledge of the world,  
And that low form of knowledge we condemn;  
We anchorites and hermits, as of Old,  
Have raised our prayers and our orisons  
To that great fount of knowledge, and we know  
We are united to the Lord of Light,  
Who reigns in glory through Eternity.

Alexis:

Umenes hath well spoken. It beseems  
The calling he has chosen is subline,  
For he and his associates are few,  
And sparsely scattered through the solitudes.  
I love the aims his order holds so high,  
For they present reality, although  
According to the wisdom of the world,  
They are as nothing in the eyes of men.  
Now let the young Antinous, sally forth  
And with his gifted speech and mystic spell,  
Enhance the pomp and power of our play.

Antinous:

Dear friends and good companions, you all know  
That I live in the city of Old Rome,  
And from that ancient center I go forth



To guide my friends upon the astral plane;  
It is my bounden duty to impart  
A knowledge of such nature to the soul,  
That I release it from its bonds of clay,  
And in a form more glorified and pure,  
It mounts with me to regions new and strange;  
And there its consciousness expands so far  
That it perceives more than the world reveals;  
Then is it in condition fit to know  
The heights to which it may claim heritage,  
And n'er more doubts its immortality.  
In that exalted region it perceives  
The hidden springs of wisdom. In its joy  
Fain would it stand forever by my side,  
To dwell in glory in this radiant sphere.  
But by a law of justice most Divine  
I send it back to its sad earth again,  
Where it must pass the trial its Lord demands,  
'Ere it would share the glories it hath seen.  
Now this, dear friends is what the Fates ordain,  
To be my present office in this life;  
O'er all the souls that rightfully aspire  
To reach the heights of knowledge and of love,  
I keep most constant watch. And when the light  
Hid in some ardent heart leaps into flame,  
I know a soul hath wakened unto Life,  
And in my keeping is henceforth consigned.  
And then upon a night most opportune—  
The body wrapt in sleep—I take the soul  
And show it heights to which it will be heir.  
So august and so striking is the scene,  
Which that evolving soul perforce beholds,  
That on awaking it is made to know,  
That this experience is no common dream.

**Alexis:**

Antinous hath done well. His noble speech  
Reveals a high and constant character;  
Well suited to the work he hath in hand.  
Now that each actor hath been introduced,  
By chosen speech and accents all their own,  
'Tis time that we begin our astral play,  
Which we have called "The Drama of the Soul."  
First let us supplicate the mighty Power,  
The author of all life in changing form,  
By that same paen of praise we always sing,  
On each occasion of our mystery play.

### SONG.

Almighty Father! Dwelling far  
Beyond the wheeling orbs of change,  
Beyond the beam of faintest star,  
And glorious seraph's highest range;  
Oh! Lord of Light! Come thou anear  
And to our paen of praise give ear.

Oh formless Being! We depend  
For life and hope and strength on Thee.  
Thou who hast given us power to send,  
Our astrals over land and sea;  
Oh, Lord of Lords and All in All,  
Hear Thou Thy servants' humble call.

Almighty Father! Who hast veiled  
Thy glories from the race and clan,  
Concealing that which prophets hailed  
As manna for the soul of man;  
God of the Worlds! Descend this hour  
And make us feel thy wondrous power.

In future cycles man will know  
The mystic tie he bears to Thee;  
Lord of the life wave's ebb and flow,  
Co-dweller with eternity;  
Ancient of Days, Oh, Lord Thou art  
The Treasure of the Pure in Heart!

Amen.

Cleo:

Since I exemplify the modern world,  
'Tis meet and just that each created soul  
Falls under my enchantment. Lest perchance  
'Tis given special grace to turn from me;  
For there are souls I cannot even lure  
From the strict path of duty.

Alexis:

And dost that give thee pain?

Cleo:

Indeed, for then I fail to satisfy  
The evil forces and malignant thoughts  
That brought me into Being. But I find  
Such souls so very few, that I pass on  
To welcome streams of souls that come to me  
Most welcome though unbidden. By my art  
My realm is presented passing fair,  
And I cast such a glamour o'er the soul  
That it at once falls down and worships me.

Isolde:

So came the young Antinous in his youth,  
But thy cursed spells did not detain him long;  
For he perceived the way to happiness,

Lay not in vanity and pride of life;  
 Then in his sorrow did he turn to me,  
 For thou did'st wound him so. His tortured soul  
 Cried out in anguish for that healing balm,  
 Nature reserves for those who come to her  
 All bruised and scarred by the lustful world;  
 Silence and solitude, these blessings twain,  
 He found beside me in the wilderness.

Alexis:

And how long did he tarry there with thee?

Isolde:

Throughout the length of one whole summer  
 time,

The young Antinous was content with me.  
 At first he was morose—much given to thought,  
 And in abstraction passed the weary hours.  
 At length he rallied from his way of gloom,  
 And deigned to follow me about the land;  
 From that time on his dormant courage rose  
 And he accomp'nied me o'er hill and dale,  
 And found delight in my society.  
 With nimble fingers I would fret the reed,  
 And draw therefrom such soul entrancing strains,  
 That we were lost in rapture at the sound  
 Which such a simple instrument gave forth.  
 Then on a day when we had climbed a hill  
 Of whiten'd rocks to view the Aegean sea,  
 He gave expression to the pure desire  
 Deep hidden in his heart. With singing voice  
 And accents musical, he chanted forth,  
 A poem like the rhapsodists of Old,  
 Were wont to body forth in ancient Greece.  
 So pure and noble were the sentiments

To which his thought gave utterance, that I wept  
To find a soul like his so young and pure.  
Perchance Antinous can recall the words  
That had so deep a meaning. For I feel  
It is but meet that he recite them here.

Alexis:

Stand forth Antinous, and repeat for us  
That wond'rous thought Isolde holds so dear.

Antinous:

'Tis a short poem that I did indite,  
When prompted by my muse on that fair day,  
We climbed a whiten'd hill that we might view  
The snowy wave caps of the Aegean sea.  
I called it, "Meditations on Old Age,"  
Here are the lines my muse ascribes to me;  
'Tis you to judge if they be good or ill:

When I have reached the limit of my time,  
And look back o'er my years in goodness spent,  
I shall not greet each day with sorrow's wail,  
Nor feed on bitter memories of the past.  
But with abiding faith in that great Cause,  
The Author of my source and origin,  
I shall collect the number of my years,  
And they will form a chaplet of rich pearls  
To be grouped into decades. On each bead  
Some mark of special merit I will find;  
Some token or reward for some good deed,  
Done in the spirit of self-sacrifice.  
Thus shall my years become my rosary,  
From it shall rise my thanks and orisons  
To that great Fount of Goodness. I will know  
That such prize is the valued recompense  
Of one who lived and breathed in the Lord.

Alexis:

The thought expressed herein is most sublime,  
No greater aim could the evolving soul,  
Put forth in subtler language.

Isolde:

Such was my own belief, and thereupon  
I did advise Antinous to go forth  
Into the Isle of Crete. There he would find  
The good Umenes, master in the art  
Of living most devout. For thus I thought:  
Antinous growing weary of the world,  
Seeks first the silence of my solitudes;  
This gives him rest and quiet. Then he grows  
Away from that false world, for Nature's balm  
Is far more potent to relieve the soul,  
Than consolations from the dearest friend.  
Then on my good advice he journeyed forth  
To find Umenes in the Isle of Crete;  
Of his long journey to that distant isle,  
'Tis meet he should in his own words relate.

Antinous:

Come forth Umenes, I would speak with thee.

Umenes:

On what theme, good Antinous, should we speak?

Antinous:

Of happy hours I spent alone with thee,  
In contemplation in thy desert cell.

Umenes:

Yea, I recall the time we tarried there,  
Sometimes in blissful silence; then again  
We talked of God and his Great Providence,  
That brought you to me in my desert place;

Yet I exulted in your company,  
For you loved nature in her every mood—  
The surest mark of an aspiring soul.

Antinous :

What were the magic hours I loved the more?

Umenes:

The hour preceding that of early morn,  
And time of hallowed eve, were by you loved.

Antinous:

Indeed, I love the coming of the day,  
When fair Aurora, goddess of the dawn,  
Sends up the East her joyful harbinger,  
With what deep notes the lusty cock proclaims,  
The speedy advent of another morn.  
Then doth a glowing light of Orient pearl,  
Which is in truth the herald of the sun,  
Diffuse itself upon the face of heaven,  
Where robed in glory, chants the morning star.

Alexis:

Antinous hath turned poet, for his words  
Have that true ring of poetry in them.

Umenes:

I, too, appreciate his glowing lines,  
Though I love more, his purity of heart,  
Which hath advanced him from a common man,  
To that of guide upon the astral plane.

Simonides:

Had he no thirst for knowledge in the years  
That marked his first withdrawal from the world?

**Umenes:**

In him the pride of life was wholly gone,  
And so could not be changed to pride of mind.

**Cleo:**

Umenes truly speaks; for had there been  
The slightest taint of pride left in the heart,  
Cleo had seen that pride of life be changed,  
Into the pride of mind. With subtle means  
She would have chained him to his intellect  
And dwarfed his intuition for all time.

**Umenes:**

Then 'twixt the voice of conscience and the world,  
You interpose the plane of intellect,  
And on this field you battle for the soul!

**Cleo:**

Quite right, Umenes. Thou has spoken well,  
And on this field of battle I have waged,  
A most victorious war.

**Isolde:**

Hast thou no place for pity in thy heart  
For all these vanquished souls?

**Cleo:**

Not I. For they have made me by their thought,  
And if I have a heart, 'tis harden'd steel;  
For in my Being, I epitomize  
All the collected Evil of the world.  
'Tis on the field of intellect I wage  
My deadliest war. For intellect is cold,  
And claims proud Science as its votary.



Behold the vain astronomer who marks  
The circles on the heavens. To his mind  
The mighty Cosmos is a sepulchre  
From which the dead therein shall never rise.  
Oh Intellect! Thy reign in this sad age,  
Hath made vain man more brutal than the brute,  
And filled misguided hearts with hate and guile.

Isolde:

The good Antinous then, was proof against  
The magical enchantments Cleo wields.

Umenes:

Because his heart was of that quality  
That reaches past the intellect, he gained  
The heights of intuition, there to rove  
In fields of bliss forever. Some there be  
Who come in contact with the intellect,  
And yet escape the web that Cleo weaves;  
If this should be their fate, they suffer more  
Than did the good Antinous, for they grow  
At first aweary of the gaudy world,  
That holds them so securely in its thrall;  
And so they turn to intellect to find  
That after years of unremitting toil,  
The canker of ambition hath but changed  
The outermost appearance of its form.  
Then are they bound to suffer tortures dire,  
And misery unspeakable, till they burn  
The vestiges of pride from out the heart.

Simonides:

As one who hath been tortured by such fire,  
Let me recite the history of my soul,  
And how I purged it of base elements  
'Ere I could reach to higher planes of life.

Alexis:

Now friends, pay heed to good Simonides,  
And be not loth to give him both your ears,  
For he is wise in that on which he speaks.

Simonides:

Know then good friends, that I, Simonides,  
Was born of wealthy parents in a land  
Where rank and title are respected more  
Than human life itself. To such extent  
Is riches glorified, that he who fails  
To pile up treasure in material things,  
Is counted fool or knave, and sometimes both.  
I was the only child my mother bore,  
Doomed from my infancy to never know  
The sweet influence of parental love.  
For 'ere my second birthday marked its round,  
Upon the circling threshold of the year,  
A pestilential plague broke o'er the land  
And scattered death and ruin in its wake.  
No human power could stay the awful course,  
Of that grim Presence sweeping country wide,  
That lay whole fields and cities desolate.  
Contagion spread, until my parents both  
Were carried off by the devouring scourge.  
Then was I reared through childhood and  
through youth,  
Up to the time of my majority  
By strangers whom the law perforce appoints  
In the exigencies of such a case.  
At last when I reached manhood's early prime,  
My peers had for me all that due regard,  
That goes with name and station. In their eyes  
I was a lord and master, born to lead  
My nation on to fratricidal war,

And raise her ensign over all the globe.  
So my misguided peers so honored me—  
Fawned at my feet, and in such attitudes  
So servile and debasing made me feel  
That such conventions were not genuine;  
And thereupon, like King Canute of Old,  
I held them up to ridicule and smiled  
At the low stage of their duplicity.  
For as the king his courtiers once rebuked,  
For their assent at his prepos'trous claim,  
That he could stem the current and the tide  
That rose and fell upon the restless sea,  
So I rebuked my worshippers. To my mind  
They were ignoble sycophants whose aim  
Was but to court some favor by such art.  
About this time I met a simple maid,  
With whom I fell in love, and wooed and won;  
She was a modest soul and in her eyes  
It seemed to me there glowed the light of heaven.  
Ten years we lived in happiness and joy;  
Then from our union there was born a son.  
Then faster beat my heart, for now at last  
The Fates had brought to me a boy and heir.  
But not an heir to worldly wealth alone,  
Would be his privilege; for I had grown  
Away from sordid thoughts that worldly men  
Hold as their one ambition. And of late  
I had eschewed the world, and made me friends  
Of men who followed science, and thereby  
Were famous for their knowledge, and received  
Much homage from their peers. Here I declared,  
Will I find rest from shams and all deceits  
That mark the epoch of our modern days.  
So with them I devoted all my time  
To wrest from Nature through the intellect,  
The secrets she withheld from common minds.

Secluded on a lonely mountain top,  
We labored long and late. Sometimes the morn,  
Streaking the Orient with his purple rays  
Still found us at our tasks, though pale and worn.  
United in our work we made our lives  
A sacrifice to knowledge, not to men.  
With super-human insight we would trace  
The path of some lost orb that long ago,  
Had vanished from the vision and the range,  
Of savants who had lived in earlier times.  
Then through our magic tubes we sounded depths  
Past human comprehension and foretold,  
The breaking up and making of new worlds  
And the return of comets. Vast as was  
The scope and magnitude of such research,  
Yet in it all there was no thought of God.  
About this time, my simple loving wife,  
Grown weary of my absences from home,  
Had found love in another, and had gone  
With her affinity, to parts unknown.  
Left with my son, my sole thought was of him;  
How I would mould his future by my care.  
With greater ardor, therefore, I applied  
Myself to my great work, and hoped thereby  
That when my son reached his majority,  
He would fall heir not only to my wealth,  
But also share with me emoluments,  
That were beyond the reach of common men.  
So ran my thought. I was ambitious still ;  
Though in my darken'd mind I knew it not.  
I, who had gauged the star depths and brought  
forth  
The secrets of the Cosmos, was to fail  
To set the bounds of life for my own son.  
In one short year he died, and I was left  
With my abstruse deductions all alone.

'Twas then such deep emotions seized my soul,  
That I gave up the friendship of my peers,  
And locking myself up in my own home,  
Lived thus in utter silence for some years,  
Had I the tongue of seraph, I would fail  
To body forth in speech the agonies  
And bitter grief of heart that crushed me down.  
At times, when anguish had so worn me out,  
I would fall on my wretched bed and cry:  
"Where is my little son, that I loved so,  
The only object in this universe,  
That held a claim on my poor throbbing heart.  
Where is he now? Oh, that some mighty Power  
Would yield him to my arms for one short hour,  
And let me clasp his little form again.  
Then in the moment of my bitter grief,  
The stricken voice of conscience that had lain  
Dormant so many years, revived and spoke  
In accents stern, a message most severe:  
"On whom, oh man of science, dost thou call,  
In this thine hour of trial and agony;  
If to the stellar depths, thou fain would'st pray  
Seek then the company of thy compeers,  
And through the magic tube, essay with them,  
To find the world to which thy son hast gone.  
For surely, men to which your rank belong,  
Need bow to no Divinity, when grief  
Removes the vigor and the life from them.  
Or better still, take all the stars of heaven  
And group them in one place, and ask thyself  
If all the stellar splendor can compare  
To that sweet memory of thy little One.  
Thou knowest it cannot, and 'tis because  
Thy son possessed a soul that he outweighs,  
All this mute splendor of the universe.  
And then I conquered pride and cast it forth

Out of my heart forever. Then I came  
Into a second childhood, and found peace  
Within myself. Then Intuition came,  
Revealing depths that lay within the heart,  
Far more profound in mystery and in Truth,  
Then those great gulfs in the etheric space,  
That span the star drifts in the milky way.

Alexis:

So by the loss of your own son and heir,  
Were you brought into life.

Simonides:

Most truly so. The pride of intellect  
Had claimed my heart. The loss of my dear son,  
Was that stupendous price I had to pay,  
'Ere knowledge would be given me.

Alexis:

And art thou now content?

Simonides:

Yes, doubly so, for through the higher force  
That animates my Being, I have seen  
Such visions and such semblances of truth,  
That I no more doubt immortality.

Alexis:

You say you have renounced forevermore  
The false light of the intellect?

Simonides:

The yellow robe that now my shoulders grace,  
Symbolical of intellect, will soon give way  
To that deep blue, the good Umenes wears.

Alexis:

Simonides hath spoken well of pride  
And doubt, its natural outcome. Cleo knows  
The consequence when pride rules in the heart.  
Cleo, stand forth and to our company,  
Make plain the chaos that results from pride.

Cleo:

'Twould be a long recital did I go  
Into the minor details of this force  
With which the modern man destroys himself.  
Sufficient 'tis to know that intellect,  
The idol that men worship in this age,  
Is the sole origin of all the ills  
With which they are afflicted. Did they know  
That intellect stands sponsor for all sin  
And is the parent of deceit and lies,  
They would abandon it in one short day  
And cleave to intuition their one hope,  
But I am here digressing. I was called  
To speak on pride alone, and the effect  
That pride itself will bring upon a race.  
Know then that pride, the child of intellect,  
Derives its strength from a material world  
And is confined to that narrow plane,  
Where mankind battles for supremacy;  
For pride engenders doubt and when the mind  
Is impressed by a force outside itself,  
The soul is so conditioned that it sleeps  
As in a trance-like state, and wakens not  
Until it breaks its prison bars of pride,  
And gains by this one act, its liberty.

Antinous:

And this one act whereby the soul might gain  
Its everlasting freedom, you oppose?

**Cleo:**

Because I am a product of that force  
That plays throughout the lower universe,  
And by my nature, I can do aught else  
But manifest the force that plays through me.

**Antinous:**

And well I know that you dare not betray  
The Evil force that brought you into form;  
For 'tis that force alone, that gives you life—  
The only life that you will ever know.  
So when I speak, 'tis not for argument,  
But merely to make clear to Anthony,  
Who is our honored guest this brilliant eve,  
The everlasting truths that underlie  
The everchanging scenes of mortal life.

**Cleo:**

Then I'll go on and give in outline bold,  
The direful denouements that befall,  
The race or nation when impelled by pride,  
'Tis hurried to extinction and to death.

**Antinous:**

Proceed. The players and the guests will hear  
From heartless Cleo, her becoming speech.

**Cleo:**

When in the course of time, the soul hath lost  
Her pristine beauty, in a world of sense,  
And looking outward only, seeks to find  
Rest and contentment in some other sphere,  
'Tis then I grasp my opportunity,  
And cast a glamour o'er her faculties,  
And shroud her deep and deeper into form,



And draw her further from Reality.  
When safely wrapt in my ensnaring nets,  
The little flame that God set in the heart  
Is by the world of matter, thickly veiled,  
So that it n'er perceives a spirit form,  
Or evidence of things above its plane.  
So in its narrow prison, it becomes  
A worshipper of intellect and puts forth  
All of its energy to outward things.  
Thus bound by laws of matter, it abhors  
The laws of spirit and descends to depths  
That bind it to illusion more and more.  
Then pride begins to reign, and from her seat  
The demon doubt, is welcomed in the heart,  
And made an ally of ignoble pride.  
Then from these two, is born both hate and fear;  
Until the man unconscious of his soul,  
Takes on a form of character as vile  
As that low form of world he functions in.  
To his low state of consciousness appeals  
The vanity and glory of the world,  
To be the one Reality he knows.  
And so he pins his faith upon a reef,  
That sinks when tides of human passion burst  
In all their fury round his little isle.  
Then men seek glory in material things,  
The seeking after riches and the race  
For honors in that world of changing form.  
Then commerce must expand and nations vie  
And meet each other on the field of war;  
Till blood runs knee deep on the gory fields.  
And all this carnage is the one result  
And culmination of the damning lie,  
That each man is a law unto himself  
And must compete against his brother man,  
For the sham prizes of a passing world.

And so the play moves on, until the time  
Is so far ripe, that divers nations fall  
And souls by myriads are condemned and lost.

Antinous:

And all this springs from intellect and pride?

Cleo:

Assuredly. For that one end I live,  
And lure men's souls to worship these two gods,  
Till drunk at sight of blood, they reel about  
To perish in a hideous dance of death.

Antinous:

Thy speech was well delivered, and it leaves  
An impress on the fancy, for it shows  
Thy subtlety of power.

Cleo:

Aye, that I know, and this red robe I wear  
Doth signify the blood through which men walk  
Who live in shadow and abhor the light.

Antinous:

The color is in keeping with the thought  
That men send out to thee. On that high plane  
Where I conduct the waken'd souls to life,  
Such shades of lurid red are never seen.

Alexis:

Enough, kind friends, of subjects so abstruse,  
And disquisitions learnèd and profound,  
Of truths and beauties hid in nature's realm,  
That baffle science and philosophy.

Come forth, Isolde, thou of simple speech,  
With good Umenes, the old anchorite  
And fair Antinous; gather all you three  
Around my ivy seat; and when I strike  
The vibrant strings of my pure silver lyre,  
And wake the sleeping echoes in the hills,  
The fair Isolde will at length relate,  
Some peaceful theme or gentle episode  
That hath a bearing on our mystery play;  
Although more simple and in lighter vein.

Isolde:

'Tis sweet to gather on a night like this  
Round our beloved leader and recite  
In simple words and mild phraseology,  
Some tale or poem that the heart holds dear.  
How sweet it is to move in ambient air,  
Made vibrant by the music of his lyre,  
Whose silver notes rebounding through the hills  
Reach to the moonlit vales.

Antinous:

Aye, sweet it is to wander forth at night,  
When full orb'd Dian casts her silver light,  
O'er all the woods and fields;  
'Tis then the traveller viewing from afar,  
The splendid luster of some trembling star,  
Knows it to be an orb that on this night  
Is dimmed in splendor by that mellow light,  
The full orb'd Dian wields.

Isolde:

Once in my childhood, I remember well,  
It was on such a night that I beheld

The fairies dancing on a rock crowned hill,  
With sprites and gnomes that bore them company.

Anon some reveller that had left the band  
Returning on a starbeam would descend,  
From unseen fields of air, and be received  
By glad acclaim from all the company.

Antinous:

Aye, 'tis a time when magic goeth forth  
To steep the fancy in forgetfulness,  
And touches souls of even boorish men  
With a deep sense of beauty. I have known  
The crudest minds to feel the influence  
That broods o'er nature in this witching hour,  
But come, Umenes, why remainest thou  
So quiet in thy place?

Umenes:

Forgive, Antinous, my abstracted mood,  
For I was so united to thy thought,  
I had forgot myself, for in this time  
The hallowed influence that nature wields,  
Doth overcome my spirit and I muse.

Antinous:

On what dost thou muse?

Umenes:

On that eternal Beauty that doth claim,  
The homage and the love of those dear souls  
That worship at her shrine.

Antinous:

Aye, dear to nature too, are those pure souls,  
For they possess that magic quality  
That makes them always very near to her.  
They are her happy children, and they love

Her outward beauty so, that she unveils  
And gives her mighty secrets up to them.

Umenes:

Aye, they are great in their humility;  
Their virtues are the wonder of all time,  
And their lives form the theme so often sung  
By seer and psalmist; for they travelled far  
Toward her shrines of beauty. I have felt  
A glamour oft steal o'er me, when at times  
I sat me down beside a purling rill,  
And heard no sound break on my solitude,  
Save that of gliding water o'er the stones;  
Or moan of evening winds. How beautiful  
To view the saffron streaks of early morn,  
That flaming in the Orient bring the day!  
How fair the night is! Then Dian, queen  
Of her imperial realm, exalted reigns;  
While all the hosts of heaven illume her course  
And form about a shining tapestry,  
That gleams aloft and sheds its sparkling light  
In heavenly glory far beyond her throne.

Isolde:

And this is Nature. In her pensive mood  
She wooes thee with her maiden gentleness  
To gaze upon her beauty, but anon,  
She makes thee conscious of a Titan's strength,  
By doffing pensive moods and to assume  
The wild sublimity of her active states.

Antinous:

'Tis said, my friends, that everything that is,  
Hath its own time and place. If that be so,  
Then you are all at fault and do me wrong,

For you digress too much, and lose the time  
That you should hallow to the work in hand.  
For you well know, that 'ere this charming night  
Hath reached its noon, our astrals must depart,  
To join their fleshly forms. Then mark the time  
And waste no moments more in idle speech,  
In praise of Nature, that we know so well.

Isolde:

I was commanded by our sovereign guide,  
To chant in song or poem, or recite  
In homely words, some tale or history  
That hath a bearing on this mystery play;  
So I will to the point and wait no more.

Antinous:

Well then be brief and cut thy verses down,  
And be not guilty of redundancy.

### THE EPISODE OF ISOLDE

Upon a stretch of yellow sandy beach,  
Where whiten'd wave-caps broke along the shore,  
And the surge murmured with a moaning tone,  
Two children were at play—a girl and boy.  
The girl, a child of nine, who was as fair  
As a fresh rose in June, and the glad boy  
Whose age was only seven, romped and played  
And shouted with his sister on the beach,  
When the incoming waves washed on the shore,  
Some curious form of sea shell that he prized  
More than the gold of Ophir. So they played  
On summer afternoons along that stretch  
Of ocean beach I know so well. The boy,  
Exulting in his daring and his strength,

Would sometimes bring more treasure from the sea,

Then his less favored sister. Then she'd weep  
To think her courage had been overmatched  
By one of younger years. And then the boy  
So moved to pity by his sister's tears,  
Would put his little arms, all bronzed and tanned,  
By wind and sun, around her sobbing form,  
And promise nevermore to rob the sea  
Of all its treasure. Then as if to bind  
Himself to such agreement, he picked out  
The choicest shells from his own little store  
And gave them all to her, to be her share.  
So through the long September afternoons,  
Played Leo and Lenora on the beach,  
That stretched its yellow sands so far away,  
Until it met that point of earth and sky  
Where Leo said it faded into air.

Now through the years of childhood innocence,  
This boy and girl no separation knew;  
For they lived in each other. If sometimes  
They would be thrown apart for one half hour,  
Lenora would inquire where Leo was,  
And Leo, looking everywhere, would ask  
Where is Lenora gone? And so they grew  
Bound up in such a close companionship,  
They felt each other's every joy and pain.  
Once on a time, Lenora, with a shell,  
Had cut her little finger so it bled,  
And in her dire extremity, she ran  
Right straight on to her mother, who bound up  
The injured member in a cotton cloth,  
And told her to go out and play again.  
But Leo would not go, for he too, felt  
The pain his sister bore, and must likewise

Have his small finger rubbed with salve and  
 wrapped,  
 And bound with cloth in just the very way,  
 His mother had rewrapped and bound and tied  
 The finger of Lenora. Then he felt  
 The pain no more, and ran on to the beach  
 To join his sister at her play, and watch  
 The crests and wave caps of the summer sea  
 Break all along the sands in whiten'd spray.

Thus passed the years of that sweet innocence,  
 Which only childhood knows. I need not state  
 These children grew to be the only joy  
 And idols of their parents. Many a time  
 The mother, watching with a loving eye,  
 The gambols of the children, would inquire  
 Of the proud husband, what he held in store  
 For Leo and Lenora. In her thought  
 She had conceived a future for these two,  
 Somewhat at variance from the common trend  
 And outline, that becomes an average mind.  
 But Stephen Bond, the father, was a man  
 Who busied himself in the world's affairs,  
 And looked askance at ideals which Louise,  
 His loyal, loving wife, so often held.  
 So when she questioned him as to his wish  
 Regarding the dear children, he would say:  
 You can do with Lenora, as you will  
 And train her in all feminine conceits,  
 That suits your erring mind. Teach her to pound  
 The piano's ivory keys, until she faints  
 From sheer exhaustion. Or, better still,  
 Confine her day and night in some small room,  
 And have her trace through long and weary  
 hours,  
 Some seemingly invisible design,



Of intricate, though puzzling needle work  
Until her eyesight fails. I'll n'er object.  
But Leo is my charge. He is a boy  
And represents my sex, and I will see  
That he is schooled in all those manly arts,  
That most become a man. So when he's called  
To battle with the world, he will be strong  
In heart and mind, and never flinch  
From tests that this progressive age demands.  
Thus Stephen would give outline to his will  
Regarding little Leo. Then the wife  
Assuming a crest fallen dubious air  
Would say no more. Though once there came a  
day

When Stephen asked her what she had mapped  
out

For Leo in the future. She replied  
That Leo had a fine artistic sense  
And vision of the beautiful, and drew  
Quaint pictures on the sea shells which he found  
Along the beach, when he was a mere child  
Of scarce six years. That she had watched  
His growing talent year by year, until  
She was convinced beyond all shade of doubt,  
That in this field, his true vocation lay.  
E'en yesterday, the good Louise declared,  
He drew upon a piece of harden'd wood,  
A picture of his sister. So exact  
Were all the curves and lines of her dear face,  
That neighbors calling in that afternoon,  
Had but to take a single glance to know  
It was Lenora's likeness. What a joy  
Should not both parents feel, to have a son  
Who showed a talent so remarkable  
In his first tender years. Should they not thank  
The Lord of all Creation, for his gift,

That found expression in their flesh and blood,  
Within the precincts of their humble home?  
Should they not give at least encouragement,  
To such ennobling effort and assist  
Their son to reach his station in the world,  
And make himself position and a name?  
Thus reasoned the good wife, but her appeal  
Made no impress on Stephen, for he grew  
The more obdurate still, and paid no heed  
To any of her wishes, but instead  
Abused her in such language that she left  
His presence all heart broken, and sought out  
The children, whom she found alone at play,  
Down in a little alcove by the sea.

The fleeting years passed on. Lenora grew  
Into a splendid type of womanhood  
And reached her eighteenth year. Leo, the boy,  
Sought hard to please his father; though 'twas  
plain

His efforts were apparent and not real;  
For we express the promptings of the heart,  
In spite of intervention, that would place  
A form upon the life it will not wear.  
So Leo could not wear the form of life  
His father chose to give him, but instead  
Still clung to those dear ideals that had made  
The glory of his childhood, and unseen  
And hidden safely from his father's eyes,  
He filled his hours of leisure with the work  
He cherished in his heart. In a small room  
Protected from his father's prying eyes,  
His mother made a studio for him,  
And fitted it with screens and canvasses,  
With palettes, brushes and accessories,  
And items that pertained to that fine art

That Leo loved so well. In this retreat  
Leo spent hours as if in Paradise,  
And lost all sense of time. His favorite theme  
Was always of the sea—the restless sea—  
Along whose shore he played when a child  
With his beloved Lenora. It was meet  
That symbol of immensity should be,  
The chief work of his genius. It recalled  
The tender memories of that happy time  
When with his darling sister, they portrayed  
The happy innocence that God alone  
Protects and strengthens by the light of heaven.

One day, when Stephen Bond, returning home,  
Asked hurriedly for Leo, and was given  
No satisfactory answer, he became  
Somewhat suspicious, and declared of late,  
He thought his family was deceiving him,  
And thereupon set out to search the house  
And bring the wily Leo forth to prove,  
The truth of his contention. So he searched  
In every room, until at last, he came  
Before the door of Leo's studio,  
And then he paused, as if to gather strength  
Before he would attempt to burst it in.  
The good Louise, who all the while had prayed  
That Stephen would not find the hidden door,  
Now felt her beating heart rise to her throat  
When she beheld, with a fond mother's eye,  
What the enraged man was prone to do.  
Then Stephen growing bold, and mad with rage,  
Charged on the door, and with a single bound,  
Leaped into his son's room. There Leo stood  
Unmoved and unconcerned with brush in hand  
Before his finished picture of the sea.  
Then shouted Stephen: So I found you out;

You and your mother have deceived me long,  
 And would deceive me longer. Now go forth  
 Into the world and make your way alone.  
 You had a father's loving aid and care,  
 But now deserving neither, you can go  
 From out my sight forever. My fond wish  
 Was that you might become a man 'mongst men  
 And bear some name and weight of character;  
 But that faint hope is gone, to come no more.  
 So go! And go at once, or by the gods,  
 I'll cut you down on this same cursèd spot  
 Where I engender'd you and brought you forth.  
 Now go! And may my everlasting curse  
 From this day forth take wings and follow you.  
 Then Leo, crushed in spirit, left the house  
 And felt his cheeks burn from the scalding tears,  
 That fell so fast upon them. On the beach  
 He met his loved Lenora, and told her  
 The sorrow that had fallen on the home.  
 She, like a good Samaritan, poured forth  
 Such streams of loving kindness from her heart,  
 That Leo felt relieved and dried his tears.  
 Weep not, she said, for it is Providence  
 That sends you forth, and not your father's rage.  
 Go forth, but go forth bravely and fear not;  
 The Fates are on your side, and you will win,  
 But I must stay alone with mother here.  
 Together we have grown from infancy,  
 And played upon these shining yellow sands  
 That girdle Neptune's empire. I would weep  
 My eyes from out their sockets, did I see  
 You go away from me by light of day.  
 It may be idle fancy, but I know  
 I'll n'er endure the anguish and the pain  
 Of conscious parting from you, Leo dear!  
 Now list what you must do. Stay on this beach

Till evening falls; then when the friendly night  
Wraps up the world in folds of ebony,  
Steal you to my bed chamber. But first take  
The milk white rose that blooms on yonder stalk  
Beneath the window of my little room,  
Then enter cautiously and by the light  
Of a small taper, which I'll leave to burn,  
Come you on tiptoe to my peaceful couch  
Where I will be asleep. Then kiss my hand  
But not my cheek, for you might waken me.  
Then leave the rose upon the coverlet  
Right near the hand that you have kissed good-  
bye.

Then make you for the nearest port and sail  
Far from your father's home. Here, take these  
coins;

Some more I'll leave you on that white bureau,  
That stands in that far corner of my room.  
Now I must go. Remember what I say  
And don't forget to leave the milk white rose  
Upon the coverlet; 'twill be the proof  
That you have followed your dear sister's will.  
Then have no fear, for that same Providence  
That sends you forth, will in the course of time  
Bend that obdurate will of Stephen Bond  
And make him cry to have his son with him.

That very night, when darkness cover'd o'er  
The face of things, Leo, the outcast son  
And heir of Stephen Bond, crept like a thief  
Toward his sister's chamber. By the light  
Of that dim taper which she left to burn  
Upon the bureau, he discerned her form  
Stretched out in peaceful sleep upon her couch;  
Then going forward up to where she lay,  
He knelt him down as though beside a bier

And seized the hand that lay so white and still  
 Upon the coverlet, and pressed it hard  
 Against his lips, a dozen times or so;  
 Then dropped the rose, as she had bade him do,  
 Almost within her palm. Then with a moan  
 Of anguish half suppressed, lest he should wake  
 His sister or the members of the house,  
 He stole from out the old ancestral home,  
 To never cross his father's threshold more.

Three fleeting years had passed, and Stephen  
 Bond

Was shatter'd so in mind and lost such strength  
 And buoyancy of spirit, that he failed  
 To keep his proud position in the world.  
 Among his many friends—men of affairs—  
 Far famed in trade and commerce, and upheld  
 By Powers higher still, in that great field  
 Of finance and of politics, he lost  
 Or seemed to lose, the customary power  
 That he had heretofore held over them.  
 The neighbors were the first to note this change  
 That had come over Stephen, and some said,  
 Who had surmised correctly, that it was  
 The absence of his son, that caused him grief  
 And that the shade of sorrow o'er the home,  
 Was more than he could bear. They sympathized  
 With him, and said it would be best to cast  
 His troubles on the shoulders of the Lord.  
 And even went so far as to suggest  
 That he retire to some secluded place  
 Where change of scene and of environment,  
 Would bring relief, of which he stood in need.

So thought his friends. For in their simple  
 hearts  
 They never dreamed that Stephen had denounced

His son, and was himself the cause of all  
This dire misfortune that had come to him.  
Within the home, Lenora and Louise,  
The loyal mother, kept the secret well.  
'Though grief, their pale companion, followed  
them,  
And feasted on their hearts, they murmured not,  
And though three years had passed since that  
sad day,  
That Leo left, it was yet evident  
That all the marks of sorrow still remained.  
Sometimes when the fond mother was engaged  
In household duties, she was seen to pause  
And wipe away the hot unwelcome tears  
That settled in the sluices of her eyes,  
'Ere she could recommence her work again.  
Lenora, once so fair, though somewhat pale,  
Grieved less than her dear mother, and declared  
That Leo lived and they would hear from him.  
For if the Will of Providence, she said  
Had sent him forth, it likewise would protect  
And care for him wherever he might be.  
The mother often wondered at such faith,  
And told the friendly neighbors, who would come  
To visit and console her, that the Lord  
Had been at least still merciful, to leave  
Lenora to support and strengthen her  
Through such a trial and sorrow, and would say  
That were it not for this abiding hope  
That came from her Lenora, she would die.

So fared the inmates of that ruin'd home  
Where sorrow came to dwell and reign supreme.  
But what became of Leo? Were the Fates  
More kind to that poor outcast than they were  
To those he'd left so hurriedly behind?

Bereft of home and friends, the wanderer  
Though sometimes downcast, and at times per-  
turbed,  
Was withal stout of heart, and met his Fate  
With such unflinching courage that he felt  
Surprised at his own strength to live it through.  
In that first year of absence, he maintained  
Himself by such hard labor, that at times  
He thought he'd n'er endure the galling strain.  
But Nature is so mindful of her own,  
And guards with such solicitude and care,  
The children of her heart, that she n'er fails  
In certain course of time, to prove to them  
That she is their protectress, and reveals  
Through divers dreams and visions of the night,  
A guiding power so strange and wonderful,  
That they become obedient to her,  
And follow all her promptings, and abjure  
The noises and the tumult of the world.  
And so it fared with Leo, for his time  
Of exile had scarce reached its second year,  
When he was likewise told to journey forth,  
Into a certain country, far removed  
From that he had at first took refuge in.  
Here Leo found some deeply learned men  
With whom he took up his abode, and dwelt  
With them in such sweet peace and harmony,  
That oftentimes he felt that some high Power  
Was consciously directing him in all  
His work and effort; for among those men  
Were talents so diverse and so pronounced,  
While all the lore and learning they possessed,  
Was not of schools, but seemed to be a gift  
From Heaven itself, for they revealed to him  
The mystery and the purpose of his life;  
Assuring him that everything that is,



Hath purpose and intent that gives it place  
In that great scheme of things that's called the  
world;

That even that deep sorrow of his heart,  
Was no mischance or accident, but was  
Ordained and prearranged in aeons past  
By the Almighty Fates, and was a trial  
So put upon him and at such a time  
As was propitious and most opportune,  
For his required development. And soon  
He would be glad and satisfied to know  
The sorrow that resulted from it all,  
Was for his own uplifting, and would praise  
The Fate that seemingly had punished him,  
As his great benefactor and his friend.

Now 'mongst this brotherhood of learned men,  
Where Leo sought his refuge, there was one  
They called the poet-painter, for he knew  
The art of painting with his magic touch  
Such glowing colors on his canvasses,  
That all his subjects seemed to take on life  
And be endowed with motion and with breath.  
Alcephas, was he named; and to his art  
The man was so devoted, that he spent  
Much time alone, and never did permit  
The other members of the brotherhood  
To see him at his work. But Leo found  
A ready entrance to his studio;  
And when the others saw such favor shown,  
To one so young in years, they knew and felt  
A soul of rarest quality had come  
To live and dwell among them, but they gave  
No outward sign or knowledge of the fact,  
Or by no word or speech expressed themselves,  
But kept their thought and counsel in their  
hearts.

So 'neath the gifted master's artist eye,  
Was Leo privileged to recommence  
To wear the form of Life his spirit loved.  
The sorrows and the heartaches of the past  
Had been alleviated, and they formed  
A kind of magic background and a place  
Or region of enchantment, for they held  
The fountains of his genius all concealed;  
And when in thought he went to this confine,  
He gained such strength and subtlety of power  
That he oft wondered at the magic feats  
His talent had accomplished; and he drew  
From out this mystic region day by day  
Such potency and quality of power,  
And images of Beauty, that he lost  
The consciousness of sorrow and forgot  
He was the outcast son of Stephen Bond.

About this time the glory of his fame  
Was known abroad, for by the Eastern sea,  
In a great city on a foreign shore,  
A painting was exhibited, that bore  
"The Ruined Home," as title and as name.  
And now it chanced that Stephen journeying  
Throughout that country to recuperate,  
Came to this very city with some friends;  
And on a day, the weather being fine,  
Went to the famous salon, where the Art  
Of many nations was exhibited.  
But Stephen showed no interest till he came  
Before that painting called "The Ruined Home."  
Then with a cry of anguish he exclaimed:  
"My God, it is my son who painted this,  
For there he stands in that same attitude  
Before his finished picture of 'The Sea'!  
Oh God have mercy on my erring soul

That I was so unkind to banish him.”  
Then with a groan he reeled and fell, upon  
A marble bench close by his friends,  
Who raised him from the seat and carried him  
Away to his apartments in a swoon.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another year had passed and Leo found,  
That Alcephas, his master, was revered  
And honored by the brotherhood as one  
Who had the gift of prophecy. In turn  
Alcephas had instructed Leo well  
In arts of Divination, and foretold  
The coming and the nature of events—  
The rise and fall of Empires, and the fate  
That would befall the most ambitious men  
Who ruled o’er nations and their destinies.  
Then on a day—the time being opportune—  
He told his pupil, Leo, that the coast  
Whereon his family dwelt, would be submerged  
And sink beneath the waters of the sea.  
And then he named the date, and then the hour  
When this would come to pass, and then declared  
That knowledge of this kind was never broached  
Or breathed forth to people in the world.  
But Leo was so just and pure of heart  
That for his sake, exception would be made  
And he would be allowed to forewarn  
His relatives who sorrowed in his home.

O’erjoyed beyond all bounds to be of aid,  
Leo inquired of Alcephas the means  
That he had best employ to carry out  
This purpose that gave hope to his poor heart.  
And Alcephas, the master who was versed  
In supersensuous arts and practices,  
Told Leo, that upon that very night

He must go back in memory to the days  
Of innocence and childhood and recall  
The happy time, when he a romping boy,  
Played with his little sister on the beach,  
And brought forth shells and pebbles from the  
sea

That he divided with her. Then again  
He must recall most vividly, events  
Of later years that made a strong impress  
Upon his fancy in that day and time  
Of early youth, when he exhibited  
The talent of the artist, and expressed  
The form of life his spirit fain would wear.  
So must his thoughts take turn, and yet in all  
This riot of the fancy, he must not  
Abandon his Lenora, but instead  
Make her the central figure of his thoughts  
And image most beloved. Then when the night  
Had far advanced, and closed his weary eyes  
In peaceful sleep, his final thought must be  
To warn her of the doom that threat'nd her,  
And that ill fated country where she lived.

Now on this night, Lenora dreamed a dream  
That had such a significance and brought  
Such glory and such import to her soul,  
And had withal such meaning that she knew  
It was a special warning sent from heaven.

So eager was Lenora to relate  
The story of her dream, that 'ere the sun  
Had streaked with silver rays, the purple East,  
She called her parents to her little room,  
And there in accents scarcely audible,  
Related her experience of the night.

I dreamed, she said, I was a child again,  
And played with little Leo on the beach,  
Where the surge murmurs with a moaning tone.  
How sweet it was to be again with him  
As in the days of childhood. Mother dear  
Forgive your loving daughter if she fails  
Because of that sweet memory to prevent  
This dream recital by a flood of tears.  
I said I was with Leo. Yes, we played  
And sported in the waves, and climbed ashore  
With arms as full of treasure from the deep  
As in the days of Old. Then suddenly  
The scene was changed; for we had left the waves  
And played within an alcove by the sea,  
Where mother came and found us all alone,  
And joined us in our play. But all the while  
She wore a troubled look, as if some thought  
Hung heavily on her mind. And then she wept  
When Leo drew some pictures on a shell  
With some sharp piece of flint that he had found  
Along the shore, and clasped him in her arms  
And held him close and would not let him go  
Till Leo asked the cause of all her tears.  
And then she loosed her hold, and Leo slipped  
From out her arms, and recommenced to make  
Quaint markings on the shells that he picked up  
Around her feet, but she observed him not,  
But fixed her gaze upon the sea, and seemed  
As one whose hopes and thoughts were far away.

Again the scene was changed. Leo the youth,  
Spent hours alone, as if in Paradise,  
At work on his great pictures of the sea.  
I marked his growing talent and rejoiced  
That I possessed a brother whom the Fates  
Ordained for such a calling. I was glad  
To know his greatest theme was of the sea;

With an artistic fancy he portrayed  
The ever restless motions of the deep,  
In storm as well as sunshine, and I felt  
The gods had surely loved him, when they chose  
This symbol of immensity to be  
The chief work of his genius. How I loved  
To watch his eyes beam with an ecstasy  
At those strange lights and shadows which he  
drew  
Upon the heaving bosom of the main.

Again the scene was changed. I walked the beach  
Alone in the full prime of womanhood.  
Leo was gone, and I had mourned for him  
Till I could weep no longer. In my walk  
I paused near by a little stony knoll,  
And sat me down to rest. Then suddenly  
Leo appeared, all clothed in shining white,  
And held his hands toward me. With a cry  
I rose, and going forward, dropped my head  
Upon his bosom in such ecstasy  
That I indulged in the sweet joy of tears;  
Then he embraced me, Oh so tenderly!  
And stroked my hair, and told me that he lived.  
Be of good cheer, he said, for I am sent  
To warn you of a danger that impends  
O'er your ill fated country, and your home.  
Remember well that 'ere the morning sun  
Paints seven more times, his glorious fields of  
light,  
This coast on which we stand, will shift its base  
And sink beneath the waters of the sea.  
Meanwhile, make preparation to depart  
Forevermore the region and the place,  
That holds all those sweet memories of your life,  
But I must caution you to observe well

The import of my message, and command  
That you warn our dear parents. Tell them all  
I have told you. Tell father that the Fates  
Were kind to his poor son, and favored him  
Through divers ways and acts of Providence,  
That gave him strength and courage to o'ercome  
His loneliness of heart and guided him  
Unto a haven of sweet rest, near by  
The pale blue waters of the Eastern sea.  
There, with a brotherhood of learned men,  
Leo, his boy, has lived in Paradise,  
And wears the form of Life his spirit loves;  
For great in holiness and sanctity  
Are these wise men with whom his Leo dwells;  
Men who abjured the world, and sought with zeal  
The Tree of Life Eternal, and were given  
Knowledge and lore and gifts of prophecy;  
There would I have you with me. So prepare  
To take our parents with you. Waste no time,  
But sail on to the Northward, till you pass  
A thousand leagues of coastline, then direct  
Your course to West, not more than fifty leagues,  
And you will pass through straits, that lead you on  
To that pale haven called the Eastern sea.  
Now farewell sister; be of good cheer  
And do that which I have commanded you.

Again the scene was changed. Leo had gone  
A little distance from me. Though he smiled  
He spoke no more, but raised his hand as one  
In act of parting from a soul he loved;  
And then his form dissolved and seemed to fade  
Into the air. Then with a cry of pain  
At his departure, I awoke to find  
Myself upon my couch and felt the tears  
That stained my woman's cheeks. Mother I know  
My dream involves a prophecy and brings

A message of grave import to us all.  
To be regarded as a sign from heaven.

Scarce had the sun completed two more rounds  
Upon his shining path, 'ere Stephen Bond  
Accompanied Lenora and his wife  
On that far journey to the Eastern sea;  
Along the coast, a thousand leagues they sailed  
Straight on to Northward. Then they passed the  
straits

That led unerringly to that calm sea  
Described to their Lenora in her dream.  
Here Leo came and met them and forgave  
His father for his error in the Past,  
And felt once more that blessed influence  
That comes forever from parental love;  
For now the heart of Stephen had been changed  
From dross to gold by sorrow's alchemy,  
And he was privileged thereby to know  
That truth and beauty dwelt in Leo's soul;  
For Leo's name was honored in the realm,  
Where he had taken refuge, though unknown  
To any one as Leo; for they called  
Him Diomed, and this new name he bore  
Was given to him by Alcephas, his Lord  
And Master, who guided him in knowledge  
And in that secret technique of the art  
Of painting with such magic touch and skill  
And supernatural fancy, that the name  
Of Diomed, was honored and renowned  
For that strange glory, which enveloped all  
The promptings of his genius, and glowed forth  
In living color on his canvasses.

So Leo had his wish and reconciled  
Again to his dear father, felt a peace  
That filled his aching heart, and buried all



The memories of the past. Not far away  
From that secluded haven where he dwelt,  
In union with his brothers, he advised  
His father to erect his dwelling place  
And make his home. Here were they safe removed  
From that impending doom, that like a pall  
Hung over that fair country they had left  
With heartaches and misgivings, far behind;  
For on the day that Leo had foretold,  
According to the word and prophecy  
Of Alcephas, the fate that threaten'd them  
The dire event had come to pass, for all  
That line of coast, for many thousand leagues  
Had sunk beneath the waves to rise no more.

And here my tale hath end, and shows a truth  
That hath much bearing on this mystery play,  
And holds an ideal ever pure and fair,  
So far above the tumult of the world,  
That fortunate are they whose vision reach  
To such high altitudes, where spirit dwells.  
But when a soul is found in true accord  
With that great Will of Spirit, it perceives  
More worlds than sage or poet e'er hath seen.  
So fared it with our Leo. Though his sire  
Exiled him from his home and drove him forth,  
An outcast on the world, yet there he found  
The form of life his spirit willed to wear;  
So fares it with all others who fulfill  
The higher laws of Being and aspire,  
Toward the heights of love and Deity;  
For they are given a power commensurate  
With those great virtues they may have attained.  
They bend the mighty Cosmos to their will,  
And send their soaring thoughts from star to star,  
And shape from out the unseen elements,  
Such forms and dreams of Beauty that reveal  
Their character of thought.

Alexis:

Isolde hath done well. Her simple theme  
Hath changed somewhat the pompous character  
And spirit of our play, and yet conveyed  
The truth in simpler form.

Antinous:

And in her closing lines, she doth suggest  
A passing thought, of which we might make use  
On this occasion of our mystery play.  
She hath declared it is the privilege  
Of favored souls and Beings to compel  
The unseen ether and the elements  
To build up forms the fancy may direct.  
Here on this balmy eve, beneath this oak  
All bathed in glorious moonlight, let us make  
A fitting end to this, our mystery play.  
Let us create by our all-powerful thought,  
Such forms and images, that will take part  
In Bacchanalian dance. For note, the night  
Is well advanced towards its noon. Cleo,  
Come forth, and use your most malignant thought,  
And make two forms from unseen air to grace  
Our evening revelry.

Cleo:

If you so will it, then I will impinge  
My thought upon the astral, and bring forth  
Two female forms all nude, whose wanton grace  
Shall far outshine pale Virtue's sickly mien.  
No raiment shall they wear, but they will be  
All garlanded with flowers, that depend  
From rounded shoulders to their shapely knees.

Antinous:

Then keep thy thought in mind, and waver not,  
For you well know your thought will not take form

Till all our wishes are made manifest.  
Then when Alexis, strikes his silver lyre  
Upon a sign from me, all images  
Created on the astral, will come forth  
To follow our commands. Umenes, come!  
What forms would you desire to conjure forth,  
To join this evening's merriment?

Umenes:

Two anchorites, your lordship, young and pale,  
Clothed in becoming raiment to offset  
The wanton vice, the vicious Cleo loves.

Antinous:

Then keep thy thought in mind; for they come not,  
Until I give the signal, though they be  
Seraphic forms of heaven, or imps of hell.  
Isolde, thou art next; what simple forms  
Would you bring forth, to dance this Bacchanal?

Isolde:

Most noble lord, two fauns with pointed ears,  
That pipe on reeds of straw, and improvise,  
With dulcet breath, some old Arcadian air,  
In memory of that happy age of Pan.

Antinous:

So shall it be. Thy choice is very wise,  
And is in keeping with thy character.  
Simonides, what forms would you create  
From those unseen and higher elements,  
To pay due homage to the god of Wine?

Simonides:

Two satyrs, would I have with cloven feet,  
And unkempt beards and long and shining teeth,

With hairy hips and features all deformed,  
To pay due homage to this drunken god.

Antinous:

Alexis, thou art last to make thy wish.  
What forms would you desire to body forth  
To grace this evening's Bacchanal?

Alexis:

I care not that they join the reeling dance,  
So I would have two centaurs, charge and prance  
Around the moving circle and display  
Their shaggy forms against the pale moonlight.

Antinous:

Now harken all kind friends and concentrate  
Your thoughts in unison. You have done well  
And in your choice, have made variety.  
Now when I give the sign, let each one clasp  
The hand that's nearest him, and though it be  
The hand of friend, or object of his thought,  
Let him not hesitate, but clasp it firm  
And form the circle for the reeling dance.  
Now strike, Alexis, on thy quiv'ring lyre,  
The mystic notes, that conjure astral forms.  
Aha! They come, impatient as of old  
To join us in our play. Clasp hands around  
And raise the song to Bacchus, god of Wine!

#### BACCHANALIAN SONG

Hail Bacchus! god of wantoness,  
God of the sparkling wine;  
To thee, our homage we address,  
To thee our thoughts incline;  
With loving ardor we profess  
To worship at thy shrine.

We reel and dance  
While centaurs prance  
Around on every side;  
While maidens fair,  
With beauty rare,  
Far round the circle glide.

Hail Bacchus! Make our senses reel,  
Here 'neath this oaken tree,  
And make each loyal heart to feel,  
The joy of revelry;  
And let no timid heart conceal,  
The debt it owes to thee.

We shout and sing,  
While echoes ring,  
Around on every side;  
While fauns with ears,  
Like pointed spears,  
Around the circle glide.

Hail Bacchus! Fill us with desire,  
This bright October eve,  
To warm with a poetic fire,  
The thought our fancies weave,  
And may no heart within our choir  
Deign evermore to grieve.

We sing and dance,  
While moonbeams glance,  
Around on every side;  
While satyrs bold,  
With faces old,  
Far round the circle glide.

**Antinous:**

What ho! ye drunken dancers, pause a while,  
For I would have you modify and change  
Your character of song. You know full well  
That this whole play was made for Anthony,  
Our honored guest, who lately came to life;  
And that its import and significance,  
Was for his special benefit alone.

Therefore I charge you, that before you leave  
This sylvan scene to vanish into air,  
That you should improvise a farewell song  
And sing it in his honor.. Keep the forms  
Your fancies have created, at your sides  
Nor let them go until the song is done.  
Here, form in semi-circle, and bow low  
Before our honored guest. Then when I give  
The well known sign, begin the chanting strain;  
But mark you, that you pause and rest awhile,  
Between the stanzas; for remember well  
Alexis sings alone the sad refrain.  
Then at another sign, you all join in  
A mighty chorus of wild melody  
Before the final end.

The circle has been formed. The players bow,  
Antinous gives the sign, and fancy now,  
In all its wildest ravings, n'er could see  
A sight more glorious than this grassy lea  
Affords this moonlit eve. What contrast here,  
Upon this sloping hillside doth appear!  
Maidens and men, whom heavenly virtues grace,  
Stand close to Vice, with her repellant face,  
And pleasure nude, suggests her sinful rites  
Hard by the side of two old Anchorites;  
Here, fauns on reeds of straw, breathe dulcet sound,  
That pierce the ears, and all our wits confound.  
While stayrs stand anear with shaggy hips,  
From whose long hair the ooze of midnight drips

And centaurs gallop through the grassy lanes,  
As once they bounded on Thessalian plains,  
All this contrasting life, obesiance makes  
Unto young Anthony, and undertakes  
In unison of song, to certify  
That in his character great virtues lie.

Antinous:

I give the sign. With modulated voice,  
Begin your tuneful strain in minor key.

The players in chorus:

Near mountain, plain or swelling wave,  
Far inland or at sea,  
Our intuitions always gave  
A true outline of thee;  
And so for many ages past  
We knew thee Anthony.

We saw the light of knowledge burn,  
Deep hidden in thy heart;  
And by its feeble flame discern,  
You were of God a part;  
Destined to rise to glorious heights,  
By Virtue's potent art.

Alexis:

Vibrate ye strings of my pure silver lyre,  
And give forth tones of such rare quality,  
That mountain streams shall pause in their swift  
course,  
To hear the praises of dear Anthony.

The players in chorus:

Rejoice! Oh, happy soul, rejoice!  
Unto our song, give ear;  
Join us with gladsome voice

And cadence clear;  
To reach ecstatic heights of song  
When gods appear.

Rejoice! Oh, happy soul, and sing,  
Sing with the piping fauns,  
Till glad hosannas ring  
O'er moonlit lawns;  
For you in golden promise bright,  
Life's morning dawns.

Alexis:

Join in the rising strains ye hills and vales,  
Resound ye groves with sweetest symphonies;  
Ye woodland streams and mountain cataracts,  
Unite your echoes to this paen of praise.

The Players in Chorus:

Exult! Oh, growing god and feel  
New powers within thee rise,  
New powers that bear the seal  
Of happier skies;  
For you have won a faith and hope,  
That never dies.

Exult! Oh gracious soul, and know  
Eternal Love assails  
All humble hearts that glow,  
When passion fails,  
To draw them from the heights of Truth  
That God Unveils.

Ascend, ascend to heights, Oh soul!  
For past the poet's dream;  
Make those high planes thy goal,  
Where fancies teem,  
Illumined by that great Sun of Truth's  
Eternal beam.



Behold! The Tree of Life is thine.  
Angelic voices blend  
With symphonies Divine,  
That never end,  
And on thy future steps to bliss  
Seraphs attend.

Lift up thy gaze and fear no more,  
Immortal Son of Light,  
For on that mystic shore,  
The sombre night  
Of sullen doubt, gives way to Faith,  
Triumphant, bright.

Hear, hear! The joyous strains that rise,  
From moonlit hill and glen,  
The evening zephyr sighs  
O'er moon and fen;  
While echoes mingle and unite  
To sing, Amen.

Antinous:

What, ho! Ye tuneful singers, 'ere ye leave  
This festal scene of mirth and revelry,  
'Tis meet you all should sing in lighter vein  
A song of farewell to our Anthony;  
Make not the strains too long, for midnight now  
Soon signals our departure. Strike thy lute  
Alexis, and bring forth the quiv'ring strains;  
Then sing in unison, and let each one  
Put forth his noblest effort for our friend,  
For years may pass before we meet again.

The Players in Chorus:

Blessings on thee, Son of Light!  
Who on this auspicious night,  
Underneath this oaken tree

On this verdant grassy lea,  
Heard such truth in pompous speech,  
Truth the inner heart would reach  
Spoken by his loyal friends,  
Coming from the earth's far ends,  
Saw such beauties that appear  
Only to the eye of seer,  
Forms from out the ambient air,  
Tripping forward to declare  
Truths of weight and import grave,  
Truths, the erring world would save;  
In a setting fair and bright,  
Magical in pale moonlight,  
Aided by such phantasies  
That aspiring spirits seize,  
Where a glamour underlies  
All that's seen by ravished eyes,  
Where a charm and where a spell  
Hovers over hill and dell,  
Waiting for the rising strain  
From our chorus on the plain,  
From whose breaths and dulcet sighs,  
Sacred tones of music rise,  
Marked at times with wanton glee,  
Mixed with sounds of revelry.

Tripping fauns and satyrs bold,  
Maidens coy and sages old,  
Virtues pale, with modest air,  
Vices gay, devoid of care,  
All unite this moonlit eve,  
So to fashion and to weave  
Such enchantment that defies  
Cognizance by earthly eyes.

Now the hour of midnight nears,  
And the full orb'd moon appears

Overhead and gives the sign,  
That our gambols we resign,  
That we leave this verdant lea  
With our brilliant company,  
To depart to distant shores;  
Where the surging ocean roars;  
Where the mountain rears its form  
'Gainst the sunshine and the storm;  
Where the flower spangled plain  
Drinks the dew and drinks the rain.

Years may pass in sad review  
'Ere our friendship we renew,  
'Ere Alexis, with his lyre  
Tinged with bright poetic fire,  
Brings us 'neath this giant oak  
Where the sleeping echoes woke,  
And we wrought from out the air  
Forms of thought and beauty rare.

Now the evening zephyrs die,  
'Neath fair Luna's silver eye,  
In the glen and in the glade,  
There is left no tint of shade  
Comes a calling from the hills,  
And the haunted woodland rills,  
Dwarfèd gnomes and mountain sprites,  
Signal now their last good nights,  
So we sing farewell to thee,  
Farewell, farewell, Anthony.

As the last tones of the song died away, the entire company of singers, including the forms they had conjured forth, the nude maidens, the anchorites, satyrs, piping fauns and centaurs, instantly disappeared, as if they had vanished into air. Under the giant oak, where they had spoken of the

higher things of life, and held their carnival of revelry, nothing remained but a grassy lea, covered with autumn leaves, bathed in moonlight.

"Come," said Herminio, "the spectacle is over," and rising from their seat, the master and his pupil, wended their way toward the hermitage.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### The Picture World

Around this visible diurnal sphere  
There floats a world that girds us like the space;  
On wandering clouds and gliding beams career  
Its ever moving murmurous Populace;  
There all the lovelier thoughts conceived below  
Ascending live, and in Celestial shapes.  
To that bright world, Oh! mortal, wouldst thou go?  
Bind but thy senses and thy soul escapes.

—The Ideal World.

On the following morning, Herminio told Anthony he would be called away to the village.

"There are urgent matters there," he declared, "that demand my attention. The work will take an entire week. I will leave every morning at sunrise, returning in the evening at sunset. You will be left here alone at the hermitage during the day; but there is a work I will ask you to do for me."

Then taking from the little shelf, where he kept his library, a roll of parchment, he gave it to Anthony saying:

"This is a treatise written in French. I will ask you to translate it into Italian. A young man who lives in a small Italian town, has lately come into life, or in other words, has reached the first ascending stage of the higher consciousness. He deserves help, but since he cannot read French, the treatise must be translated into his native tongue—the Italian. So I will expect you to begin work on it today.

When I return tonight you may refer to the matter you have translated, but by no means must you ask any questions regarding the astral play of last night, or make any mention of the beauty or mystery that attended it. The translation of the treatise will take you a week's time, and when you have finished it my work in the village will have been completed. Then we will take up the subject of the astral players, and I will be glad to go over it with you, and give you whatever light and knowledge you at present deserve."

After Herminio had gone, Anthony started to work on the treatise. He found it to be a series of rules and admonitions, to the neophyte who was entering the occult life. Cheerfully he set himself to the work, for he felt the joy of service. He was helping a fellow being to tread his first steps in the world of spirit. What a blessing and what a privilege was his! Already he sensed the great truth, that the pupil in time must become a teacher, directing others in the perilous path to knowledge.

Herminio returned at sundown. After they had taken supper, the sage suggested that they go out into the yard. "The physical man needs rest, he declared, and the arduous nature of our work demands it. Let us sit out in the open, a few hours before retiring, and you may ask me any questions which you may have in mind."

In answer, Anthony was about to refer to the spectacle of the previous night, but remembering the admonition given him, he checked himself and referred to the subject matter of the treatise.

"I find," he said, "the main thought which the writer expresses, to be a series of advices, relative to rules and conduct of life, which all aspiring souls must necessarily follow, who would reach to the primary stages of the higher consciousness."

"Yes," replied Herminio, "But this young man is at present not aware of the higher things at all. He has, however, gone through certain experiences, that have given him much suffering in the physical world. He has grown weary of the physical life, and knows it to be inadequate to bring him everlasting happiness, and he has begun to ask himself the why and the wherefore of things. Now this growing weary of the physical life, is a sure sign that the soul has exhausted the experiences of the physical plane, and is preparing itself for the next step in its drama of evolution, where higher conditions will be staged. When this desire begins to manifest in a sincere way, there is always a teacher at hand to guard the flame in the soul, until its light grows strong enough to shed a radiance on the next plane of Being and awaken the astral vision. In the present case the young man in question, has of course found his teacher, who can give him at present only hints and suggestions. When you have finished the translation, I will forward it to this teacher, who will in turn give it to the young man, his pupil. Coming from his teacher, he will hold as sacred the advice, and follow it to the letter. Then when his astral vision awakens, he will hold his teacher in such high regard as to almost reverence him; and though he may be separated from him, yet he becomes a part of his consciousness, so that the master knows at any moment the condition of the pupil's soul, and in what stage of consciousness he is functioning."

"Such phenomena are marvelous," remarked Anthony, "but I have of late seen so many wonders, that I have ceased to marvel."

"Yes," rejoined the seer, "when one lives in the higher planes of Being, gratitude takes the place of wonder—gratitude for the Great Being, who unveils

the glories of creation and the supernal beauties of the unseen world!"

"I said, I had ceased to marvel, and yet I marvel at your language; for it sounds almost apostolic."

"That is because Truth is ever conveyed in a beautiful form. The higher the truth, the more beautiful the language that expresses it," replied the seer.

For a time Anthony was silent, while Herminio remained poised, as if awaiting the next question.

"Tell me," finally asked the pupil, "if I deserve to know, the means whereby the master is given the knowledge, as to his pupil's condition?"

"Yes, I can tell you that," replied the old man. "It is conveyed by a series of pictures, that appear in the astral. In the first stages of awakening life, this picture world is not revealed to us. Instead we see single objects and these objects are symbols. That the symbols are related to objects in the physical world, you have already learned by your own experience. Later the time comes when entire pictures are presented to the vision of the seer. When the seer wishes to obtain specific knowledge of a certain kind, as for instance, the condition of consciousness in which his pupil is functioning, he impinges his thought on the astral, and a picture of his pupil is presented to his vision. If the neophyte has been worthy of the trust and confidence reposed in him, by his master and performed his work willingly and joyfully, the result will be shown in the picture. For example, if my master desired to know if I was carrying out his wishes, regarding the young man who lives in the small Italian town, which I mentioned yesterday, he would project a powerful desire to know this, and immediately a picture would form out of the astral elements which he would perceive with his astral vision. The picture would possibly show this hermitage. This would be what



I call the first phase of the vision. My master would know it to be my dwelling. This would prepare him for the second phase that would soon follow. In the next phase, the inside of the hermitage would be revealed. In the center of the room, we would be seen standing near each other engaged in conversation. Then I would walk over to the wall and take down the roll of parchment from behind the books and be seen showing it to you. This second phase would now fade away to be followed by another, in which I would be seen leaving the hermitage for the village, while you were inside the hut, leaning over the parchment with bowed head, hard at work on the translation. Then this last phase of the picture would fade away, and my master would know I was loyal to his trust, and was doing the work assigned to me."

"Is this the only method, whereby the seer knows what is taking place at a distance?"

"No, there are other means aside from this; but of that I can not speak at present. However, this is the first method that the beginner in the occult life is given, to enable him to obtain specific knowledge, on any one point on which he might want information."

"A most wonderful power," remarked Anthony, "since it follows the first stages of astral experience, it must occur that this phenomena takes place on the higher planes of the astral."

"Indeed it does," replied the seer, "and it makes me happy to know that you have risen to such a height of consciousness, as to be able to state such sublime truth."

"Then I will ask you, how you would designate in language, those higher sub-planes of the astral?"

"To begin with," replied Herminio, "There are seven divisions of the astral, each one of which is a sub-division; the phenomena of each division as it rises in the scale, being a stage higher than the

one preceding it. Some occultists number these planes and speak of the sixth and seventh subdivisions, but I prefer to call the lower planes of the astral, the plane of symbols, because everything seen there is a symbol, which the seer must in time learn the meaning of, through the relationship they bear to objects in the physical world. The higher sub-planes of the astral, I call, The Picture World, because it is here that a world of pictures is thrown open to the astral vision of the seer."

Again Anthony was silent. What a wonderful life was opening before him, according to the knowledge of the Herminio! He could scarce refrain from referring to the spectacle of the astral players, of a few nights previous, but he knew he must wait. So the remaining days of that week were spent on the translation. When it was finished, the week had passed and Herminio's work at the village was also completed. At last the time had come when reference could be made to that wonderful drama, that had been enacted under the oak tree for his benefit alone.

"Good master," said Anthony, as they seated themselves in the growing dusk, in the yard of the hermitage, at last the time has come when I can refer to the spectacle that took place one week ago tonight—a spectacle of such wondrous beauty and mystery, that I carry the memory of it enshrined in my heart."

"Yes, yes," replied the seer, in a reverential tone. "It is not given to everyone to witness this drama of the super-sensuous world. But you were on account of the great purity of your life, accorded this favor."

"Then this drama is enacted only on very rare occasions?" asked Anthony.

"Once in every seven years," replied the sage,

"the band of players, led by Alexis, the Greek poet, produce this play for the benefit of awakened souls. This puts forth the beauty and imagery of the astral world, in such a marvelous setting, that the beholder cherishes the memory of the event ever after in his consciousness."

"Tell me good master, do you know any of the players personally?"

"Only one, and that is Antinous, your astral conductor. He visited this part of Switzerland about ten years ago, and paid me a personal visit. At that time we knew of your condition and spiritual awakening, through the images you cast into the picture world. In fact you were the chief topic of our conversation at that time; and I remember well how Antinous exulted in the thought that he was soon to conduct you on the astral plane."

"And Umenes, the anchorite, and Simonides, the astronomer, and Isolde the gentle shepherdess, do you know anything of them?"

"I have never seen them in the flesh," replied the seer, "but they have made me occasional visits in astral body, and I have likewise paid them visits in the same manner."

"Then you have the power of projecting your astral body?"

"Certainly, that power is mine, and in a few years it will be accorded you," answered the seer.

"But have I not already been on the astral plane?" asked Anthony.

"Yes, many times, but on each occasion, you were taken out during the time your physical body was in sleep, so while you functioned there consciously, and brought back the memory of what you saw there, yet you did not project your astral vehicle by your own will, but you were taken there by the will of another. However, the time will come when

you will be able to project your astral, by the power of your own will."

"Then the astral players we saw a week ago to-night, all have this power?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Herminio, "that is one of the privileges accorded all illuminated souls. They are no respecters of distance, for distance offers no barrier to them. By projecting their astrals, they visit each other at stated times. Even when functioning in the flesh, they know each other's most secret thoughts, for they are one in consciousness."

"What of Cleo, the woman robed in scarlet and flashing jewels? Is she a real entity?"

No, my son; she was only a powerful thought form, generated by the combined thought, of the whole company of players. She personified Evil, and as Evil is relative and not absolute, her existence is relative only. She was in very truth a phantom, but it is this phantom that men pursue in the physical world, when they are guided and dominated by their lower nature, following their passions on the one hand and the adulation and praise of the Voice of the World, on the other."

"I know so well the illusions of the world, in which I suffered the martyrdom of crucifixion, that I would fain speak of other things. Tell me, good master, of Simonides the astronomer."

"Simonides," replied Herminio, "now lives in retirement in Egypt. At one time he was connected with the greatest observatory in Europe. It was during that period of his life, that he lost his only son, which was the event that brought him into the higher consciousness."

"I can understand his case," said Anthony. "He tried to comprehend the mysteries of the universe, by the poor vessel of human reason and of course he failed."

"Yes," rejoined the seer. "Intellect cannot grasp the meaning of life, or the wherefore of things; so it is necessary that Simonides should pass through the fiery ordeal, 'ere knowledge was given him."

"And Umenes, his is an exalted soul, tell me of him, gracious master?"

"My son, Umenes is a soul virtuous and great. Illuminated by sanctity and knowledge, he represents the fruit of the Pure in Heart. In his home in Crete, he lives in seclusion, much after my manner of life here in Switzerland. He has no pupils. On one occasion, however, he gave refuge to the young Antinous, according to the statement of Isolde."

"Ah, Isolde! How I remember her sweet character," sighed Anthony. In the recital of her episode, which was remarkable for its simplicity and beauty, she gave expression to truth, with such tenderness and pathos, that at times I could not repress my tears."

"I noticed that you were much affected by her recital," continued the seer, especially that part wherein she described the character of the men of sanctity with whom the outcast Leo had taken refuge, and referred to them as men having strange powers and capacities, to read events in the future:

"Men who abjured the world and sought with zeal,  
The Tree of Life Eternal, and were given  
Knowledge and lore, and gifts of prophecy."

"And this brings us," continued the seer, "to the subject of prophecy. In this recital of Isolde, Alcephas, the poet-painter, prophesied that the coast on which the family of Leo dwelt, would in seven days sink beneath the sea. Now the knowledge of this future event, was given to Alcephas through the Picture World. To his astral vision, there was revealed a picture of the sinking of this line of coast, and the time it was to occur was likewise made known to him.

He was privileged for the sake of Leo, to warn the family of Stephen Bond. Hence the dream of Lenora, so beautifully described in the episode. You will remember that Leo was cautioned by Alcephas the evening before the dream occurred, that he must go over in memory, the events of his childhood; but that in all his riot of fancy, he was to hold before his mental vision, the beloved image of his sister Lenora. In following this advice of his master, Leo made by these thought processes, a series of images in the Picture World, corresponding to the scenes in the days of happy childhood, when he played with his sister on the beach. In the earlier stages of her dream, Lenora saw these pictured images and lived over again that happy period. In the later stages of her supposed dream, she did not dream at all, but she met her brother Leo on the astral, for she avers that he was 'clothed in shining white.' You will remember your own case the exaltation of consciousness you felt when you met Antinous, your astral conductor. He, too, was clothed in shining white, or appeared as a white marble statue. So Lenora's experience was something like your own. In the words of Antinous, she knew on awakening:

"That this experience is no common dream."

It was on that account that she reported the dream to her parents and told them it had a significance they could not ignore. From the earnestness of her appeal, they could do nothing but obey the voice of the prophecy. Thus were they saved from destruction and reunited to their son, where they dwelt in peace and happy security."

"And it is in this manner," continued Herminio, "that the oculists and the mystics are warned of any approaching danger that threatens them in the physical. In the picture world, images of future events

that concern them personally, are accurately forecasted and presented to their astral vision. All the circumstances that surround the events are clearly outlined. At first these pictures have intimate connection, only with events that are to happen in the life of the seer, so that when the event finally takes place, the illuminated soul knows that it has been protected from physical danger, by occult processes, that are utterly beyond the scope and power of the physical man. Hence he learns to trust these unseen forces that guard his life and destiny. At a later period, the images in the Picture World, refer to world events, in which the seer will have no personal connection. But he knows from the knowledge that is now his, that these prophecies—for so he now regards them—will surely come to pass. Having reached the heights of Cosmic consciousness, there is nothing in the physical world that can affect his peace and equanimity."

"And he is likewise shielded from all physical danger?" interposed Anthony.

"Always," replied Herminio. "That is one of the conditions of the life when it reaches the higher planes of consciousness. While it functions in a physical body, which St. Paul has so aptly described as a body of death, yet its activities are so far above it that the vibrations from the physical world, no longer affect its existence. Having risen to those blessed heights of love and peace, it dwells in an ecstatic state of happiness and security, unknown to the earlier stages of its life in the lower world."

"Have not the poets of all lands and times, in a measure, grasped this great truth and given it expression? Is not the true poet an embryo prophet, and are not his utterances to be regarded in the light and nature of prophecy?"

"Yes, my son, you are quite right," replied the old man. "The true poet has glimpses of The Reality

that lies behind the veil. In his higher flights of fancy, he soars above the World of Illusion and bathes in the Divine Elixer, bringing down to a sordid world, images of great truth and beauty. Thus a great world poet, expresses yearnings and longings, which are already the sacred possessions of the seer. He would live on those exalted heights, where the seer now dwells. He longs to be above the plane of sorrow and trial and human misery. In one of his sonnets Tennyson sings:

"Though Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon  
And bitter blasts the screaming autumn whirl,  
All night through arches of the bridg'd pearl  
And portals of pure silver walks the moon.  
Walk on my soul nor crouch to agony,  
Turn cloud to light and bitterness to joy,  
And dross to gold with glorious alchemy  
Basing thy throne above the world's annoy;  
Reign Thou above the storms of sorrow and ruth  
That roar beneath. Unshaken peace hath won thee,  
So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms of Truth;  
So shall the blessing of the meek be on thee;  
So in thine hour of dawn, the body's youth  
An honorable eld shall come upon thee."

"As the moon sails above the storms of the world, and changes the leaden clouds to gold, by its wondrous alchemy, so the poet would have his soul move on above the storms of human passion, and at the same time change the dross in the heart of man to finest gold! This quality of soul, the seer already cherishes as his possession. It is his heritage from a well ordered past."

"Then the poet longs and aspires after that which the seer already possesses?" asked Anthony.

"Yes, my son, and in time he will reach to seership."



**"Then the astral players are all seers?" inquired Anthony.**

**"Without question, they are seers and prophets," replied the sage. "While the poet longs to remain on their high level of consciousness, he is such a prisoner in the physical body, that he obtains only momentary glimpses of reality; hence the longings and yearnings to which he gives expression. Now the players who visited us a week ago tonight, in their astral forms, function so much of their time on the higher levels, that it is difficult for them to come down to earth, and converse on subjects of ordinary interest. Hence their pompous speech which was in keeping with their character. You will remember it was with great difficulty that Alexis and Antinous could persuade them to drop their heavy accents, and allow Isolde to proceed with her simple yet beautiful episode. Even then, the subject matter of the episode must have a bearing on the great truths set forth in the mystery play."**

**"And while they live in different parts of the world, yet they are in constant communication with each other?"**

**"Yes," answered Herminio, "by the transference of thought on the Astral currents, and images in the Picture World, they know the spiritual and physical conditions that surround their compeers at any moment. It is their business to keep watch over the souls that are coming into Life. They are made aware of these awakenings, by what is presented to their astral vision in the Picture World. Then they send thoughts of love, sympathy, faith, confidence and hope. These thoughts impinged on the astral at certain intervals, result in symbols which appear as visions before the neophyte. Soon he learns to connect these symbols of the astral, with objects and events on the physical plane. Thus, what symbols**

appear in the astral, are as forerunners of events that are to take place in the physical. Later these events actually take place; and the neophyte knows beyond any doubt, that occult processes are guiding his life and destiny."

"At first the embryo occultist keeps his marvelous experiences locked in his own heart. They are too sacred to be revealed. In doing this, he follows a law of the higher planes, which is as strict as the law of gravitation in the physical world. At a later period he meets his teacher. It is by no chance or accident that this meeting occurs. All has been arranged in accordance with immutable law. Then he learns from the lips of his teacher, the great truths of Life and the mysteries of Being. For the first time in his experience, he perceives his almost limitless capacities and possibilities. Before his master he stands as a little child, trustful and obedient. His soul has awakened into Life. He has been born anew. The physical world has lost its allurements and therefore its tyranny over him. He has learned that spiritual consciousness is real life. As he grows in virtue and purity of heart, new glories are revealed to his higher vision. At last the veil is still further lifted, and instead of symbols, complete pictures of great beauty and prophecy are made to appear to his eye of Soul. He is now on the Path, climbing the great heights that the seers and prophets of Old have ascended before him. What glories of God are to be further revealed in the infinite stretches of time, only the archangels and seraphs know. But come, the night is late. We must take our much needed rest."

Then rising from their seats, the two men stepped from the inclosure into the hermitage.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### The Shadow of the Astral

Not in vain the distance beacons,  
Forward, forward let us range;  
Let the great world spin forever  
Down the ringing grooves of change.

—Locksley Hall.

When Anthony and Herminio stepped out of the hut on the following evening and took their seats in the inclosure, the dusk was deepening into night. The faint flush of sunset had now changed to sombre shadow. Far away in the Northwest, the great Cross in Cygnus, gleamed in upright position, resplendent with flaming jewels. Regarding for a moment the beauties of the star lit expanse, Anthony turned to Herminio, and laying his hand gently on his shoulder, exclaimed:

“Good master, I do not like to question you. Rather would I listen to the words of wisdom that fall from your lips. But I would fain know why the world must endure the sorrows and the miseries and the heartaches that are everywhere so evident? Why is it that only a few are admitted into Life, while countless millions of souls must live in sorrow, poverty and darkness?”

“My son, I am glad you have asked me this question,” replied the seer. “In our previous discussions we have talked of super-sensuous phenomena only. But the time has come when you must know why the world groans in travail, why the beauties of the great

universe of God are unknown to the teeming millions, and lastly, why so many lay down the burden of life in the sheer agony of despair."

- ✓ "Now man is a consciousness entombed in matter. In his heart is located a tiny flame of spirit, whose light if it be allowed to shine, would bring the man ultimately to Godhood. But the Evil Forces, which are nothing more than the thought vibrations of the mass of mankind, are in the aggregate of a character that are so purely physical, that the average man, entombed in his prison of flesh, readily responds. And the more he responds, the more the tiny flame of spirit is enshrouded in the thick veils of matter, until the man finally doubts the existence of spirit altogether and believes and trusts in nothing but the material world of illusion. \ For such an one, the higher planes of life are forever sealed and the beautiful phenomena which you have witnessed through the higher vision is absolutely unknown.

"Tonight we sit under an October sky and through the glimmer of the star depths, we behold the splendor of the physical universe. Yet we know that all these countless orbs, that deck the firmament—that all the distant galaxies that glitter in the deeps of space, form only the first and lowest department of Nature—the physical plane. That above and beyond, though included within the physical universe, there is another plane, called the astral, in which you are at present functioning.

"Now the planes of Nature are just as numberless as are the physical stars of space. There are therefore, universes within universes, of which the crude mind of ordinary man has absolutely no conception. How well the occultist and the mystic understand the great truth to which The Christ gave utterance: 'That in His Father's house were many mansions.'

"Unaware of the great truths that underlie human life, the mass of the people of the world are completely buried in the physical. Countless millions spend their whole lives in exhausting labor, to obtain sufficient food to nourish their physical bodies. Others, who are surfeited with the wealth of the physical world, spend their years in idleness and sin. Revelling in the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, the tiny flame of spirit is so heavily veiled in matter, that its light cannot be seen. In this condition, men doubt the very existence of spirit, and entomb themselves deeper and deeper in matter. Physical life is explained by physical concepts only. Pride joins hands with deception and the standards of hell are raised on the ramparts of heaven. The sun of Truth is eclipsed by the malice in the heart of man, so that the world in this present age remains in astral shadow."

"Modern society being an expression of the collective consciousness of the race, it is plain that it must evolve to higher conditions before humanity becomes free. Taken for granted that the present condition of society is to last forever, we can easily see why the world remains in the Shadow of the Astral, and groans in travail and sodden misery.

"But this condition is not always to last, for a new cycle is dawning. The time will come when a great number of the human race will suffer crucifixion on the Cross of Matter. Rising from their experience to a higher plane of consciousness, there will be revealed to their awakened vision, the beauties of the astral world. Then the thought images projected into the astral will be of such a character as to influence the greater number of humanity to a nobler and higher ideal of Life.

"At the beginning of the next century, this process of evolution will have commenced in all the enlightened races of this globe. Each century will

see more and more souls coming into Life. Finally, in the far away future, every soul that inhabits this earth, will have attained to astral vision. It is impossible to describe the happy activity of that glorified humanity, in this golden age of the future. Having risen above the plane of the intellect, pride, avarice and selfishness will have no place in the heart of man. The social conditions will have undergone such change as will be in keeping with the advanced consciousness of the Race. Astral dramas of great beauty and mystery, produced by astral players, for the edification of souls that have awakened into Life, will be of common occurrence. In fact this method for the presentation of spiritual Truth will be in vogue throughout the whole earth. From the brief description of that coming age, which is to be the glorious heritage of the souls in this epoch of the future, I must now draw the veil. In this outline enough has been given to bring you to a realization of the happy condition that will result when the world, fully aware of higher planes of existence, is guided through Faith by promptings from within, and finally passes out from the shadow of the astral.

“But at present the reverse is the case. Enveloped in astral tenebraes—shut out from the light of the spirit and the higher consciousness—the world indeed groans in travail. As a pioneer of the future, it is your bounden duty to charge the astral currents with the noblest thought forms which your higher consciousness is capable of projecting. These thought forms, contacting the vibrations of souls that are coming into Life, give them uplift and encouragement. In time, other souls will aid in this work of redeeming man from the illusions of the purely physical world. For centuries, this process will go on. Finally, humanity will stand erect and free—freed alone by that all-powerful thought which

finds its origin and its center on the inner planes of invisible Being.

"Now there is a time when each inhabited globe in the Cosmos is enveloped in astral shadow. That time for the earth is now. Humanity having not yet risen above the plane of intellect, is so heavily veiled in matter, that it cannot pierce the veil of illusion; hence it knows nothing of the mysteries of Life or the secrets of Nature. Each man imagines that he is a law unto himself—that he is better than his brother—hence the resulting chaos we see in so-called civilized society; for society is not yet civilized. In the present age we hear much of the rights of nations and of individuals. It is only in the nether world that the notion of rights could be put forward and claimed as a principle. On the higher planes of existence, the evolving soul never thinks of its rights. It has none. It has only duties—to help struggling humanity to escape from the tenebraes of matter—this is its only joy. This is its only reward. It asks no other. Having made the Unity with the Self—with the Universal Mind—it becomes a channel of Divine Grace, giving the blessings it receives from the Author of Life, freely and abundantly to all men.

"There is a saying in the physical world to the effect that we cannot know a thing until we have experienced it. This declaration holds true in the higher planes as well as on the lower. There was a time in your own life when you functioned only in the physical. You felt the sense of separateness from other human beings. You were an individual unit. The main springs of your life and action, was individual effort for your individual self—that at least was the light in which you saw your actions at that time. You functioned in your personality. The physical man labored for a worldly reward. The approbation of your pupils—the respect in which you

were held by your superiors—honors and advancement in the world—physical love—the love of wife and child—ties of kinship and blood, the hallowed memory and esteem of friends, these formed the narrow circle that bound the activities of your life. The personality was in the ascendent. It occupied the first place. There was no other thought but of the lower self. But suddenly, almost in the twinkling of an eye, all this was changed. The world in which you functioned disappeared from you. The destruction of Messina buried all your hopes. The love of wife and child was forever gone, only their memory remained. There was no one in the whole earth with whom you bore the chain of human ties. In such a condition many persons, when reduced to abject poverty, end their lives by their own hands. This is because their consciousness being so wholly absorbed in the world of matter, knows no life or phenomena above the sense world. To the souls of such persons, the higher planes are sealed. The beautiful symbols of the first sub-planes of the astral and the images of the Picture World are unknown to them. Enveloped in astral shadow, they cannot pierce 'The Woven Glooms of Truth.' Imagining the physical world to be the one Reality, all hope is gone when that world and its illusions disappears. In your case the conditions were different. For some years prior to the event that changed the current of your life, you had longed for knowledge. Truth at any price was your constant prayer. Then came the cataclysm. The forces that controlled your life, were ready to give you knowledge. From you they took away everything you held dear in the physical. The personality in which you had alone functioned, suffered a severe trial. In occultism this is called the trial by fire. The physical world having disappeared, there is nothing to which the personality can attach itself.



It must, therefore, suffer extinction. Crucified on the Cross of Matter, the personality writhes in the throes of an agonizing death. No language can describe the extent or the degree of the torture that the personality endures on its way to final extinction. But it must die, for it has nothing on which to live. If it thirsts, it is given gall instead of water. If it looks for love, it finds hate. If it expects sympathy, it meets scorn, thus signifying that its life is still functioning in the world of illusions. That it is still within the domain of the law of the pair of opposites, and must suffer and die there accordingly."

"At last the personality, unable to endure the torture any longer, finally dies and is laid in the tomb. Then follows apparently a short period of suspension. Soon after a most marvellous thing occurs. There is a resurrection. The individuality of the man has awakened. From the death of the personality, is the individuality born. It rolls away the stone from the sepulchre. The physical world which entombed the personality, cannot imprison the individual man. He is above the limitations of such a prison. He rises triumphant from the tomb of Matter. Clothed in a finer body, the individuality is able to receive vibrations from a plane of Being, above and beyond the physical. Having risen above the plane of illusion, where the personality was under the dominion of the intellect, the individuality is now led by the intuition. Intellect, which gave the man worldly knowledge, is superseded by intuition, which brings heavenly wisdom. The Ego of the man begins to express itself. A feeble light begins to illumine, the spaceless chambers of the soul. The long darkness of the physical night is being broken by the advent of a most marvellous day. It is the morning of the resurrection. Having overcome the limitations of a material world, the soul is about to be given to eat of the "Tree of

Life." A glorious sun has risen on the horizon. In its magical light, the soul beholds that plane of Being that supersedes the physical."

"Symbols glowing with thought and color, are projected along the astral currents and presented to its astral vision. At last the soul perceives the wonderful meaning that underlies that simple phrase: "The Tree of Life." A mystical relationship exists between creature and Creator, of which the awakened soul had never before dreamed. In time it learns that the beautiful symbols of the first sub-planes of the astral, are the thought forms of that hierarchy of Beings, who, while functioning in the flesh, are living in such exalted states of consciousness that they have the God-like faculty of transferring instruction by such occult means, and at the same time introduce the neophyte into the secrets of Creation. It is at this stage of unfoldment, that the awakened consciousness swears allegiance to the Higher Self and thereby disentangles itself from the physical—the world of illusions. Never more will it be bound on the wheel of necessity, since it has passed that cycle of its Being."

"Through the illumination which the soul receives from the higher planes of consciousness, it knows that a time will come in the history of every soul, when it must suffer crucifixion on the Cross of Matter. Therefore, the ordeal which it endures is common to all the rest. There is no exception. The crucifixion is a fact in nature. Only by this means, can the personality be made to die to the world of illusions. Only by this means, could the soul ever be made aware of the great truth, that plane after plane of Being supersedes the physical. That as the soul reaches the ascending stages of consciousness, it is given finer vehicles in which to express its corresponding activities. Finally it learns that its life

on the astral, is guided by intelligences that make their thoughts manifest by a symbol and color language. Thus they conduct the awakened soul on its first perilous steps in the world of spirit. By the ascending stages of consciousness, the Picture World, in all its beautiful phenomena, now unfolds itself to the God-like vision of the seer. Thus the soul perceives that there are universes within universes, and that the planes of Being are as infinite in number, as the sands of the sea!"

"It is said that when the astronomer, Herschel, directed his telescope for the first time at the Milky Way, the dazzling galaxies of suns and star streams, impressed him with such wonder, that he fainted away. Now if the astronomer, who already has knowledge of a plurality of worlds, is nevertheless awed and stricken with wonder, how much more so must the awakened soul marvel at the secrets of Creation. Tonight we sit under an October sky. Sagittarius, with his star streams is rising on the horizon. We are impressed with the beauty of the constellations and the configuration of the star groups. How often, on similar occasions during the period of youth and early manhood, did you direct your gaze upward to those mute sentinels of the sky, and on summer evenings, wonder if that great zone of light revealed greater glories, when after bursting its bounds in Sagittarius, it continued its shining way into the southern hemisphere!"

"Now you know that the entire universe with all its stellar wonders—its suns and planets—star streams and inhabited worlds—is only the first and lowest order of nature, the physical plane. That this wonder that God reveals, is the first and lowest in the scale of Creation. That as the soul evolves, glory after glory will be unveiled. You will remember that Simonides, one of the astral players and also an

astronomer, said 'that there were depths within the human heart far more profound in mystery and truth than these great gulfs in the etheric space, that span the star drifts in the Milky Way.' This wonderful declaration is absolutely true. Having arrived at that stage of unfoldment, where the illusions of the physical world no longer affect it, the awakened soul not being entangled in physical phenomena, stands aside from it and views impartially the Life force as it manifests itself through matter. Then turning within, it discovers in the human heart, such hidden recesses of beauty, that are more profound and wonderful than those great depths which Simonides declared, spanned the star drifts in the Milky Way.

"From the height of consciousness that you have reached, you are now able to perceive clearly the reason why the world groans in travail and vexation of spirit. Humanity as a whole, will not trust the Law. It imagines the prizes of Life to lie in the world of illusions. Every self forgetting impulse must therefore be checked in its inception, otherwise the soul might obey some higher law, that would direct its energies away from the purely material world, and this in such an age as the present, would be disastrous. By such a course the prizes of the world would be lost and the man be deemed a visionary."

"Thus, in as far as it obeys the voice of the world, humanity doubts the existence of the spirit. It even fears to put any faith at all in the invisible and the unseen. So it buries itself deeper and deeper in matter, and hugs the chains that hold it captive; lest perchance, the links might give way and it might, perforce meet new conditions, that would require such readjustment as to threaten the mode of life and the existing form of society. All this, in the face of that beloved master, the Christ, who told them to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice,

and that if they did this, what things they needed of a physical nature, would be added unto them."

"Thus, as humanity enshrouds itself deeper and deeper in matter, it clings so desperately to the physical life and its cherished world of illusions, that no light from the spiritual planes can pierce the thick veils of matter in which it is entombed. Although the light shines around it from every corner of the universe, it can not enter the spaceless chambers of the soul, for the soul has erected a barrier through which the light cannot penetrate. Thus the world remains in astral shadow, because it chooses the tenebraes and the darkness. Knowing nothing of a plane of life above the physical, the great masses of humanity must suffer the tortures that are put upon them from the fact that they have pinned their faith to a world of illusions."

Here Herminio paused, and in the silence that followed, Anthony felt the majesty of the truth.

"Good master," he finally said, "is there any hope for humanity in the future, and to what extent are souls protected from astral tenebraes, that have really awakened into Life?"

"My son," replied the seer, "you have asked two questions in one, and I must answer them separately. First, you wish to know if there is any hope for humanity in the future. This question I can answer in the affirmative. Even now there are souls in the world who function wholly in the higher consciousness. Of these, you are one. You, and other noble souls who have reached to this higher consciousness, are indeed the pioneers of the Race. The object of your lives, is to so charge the astral currents with the quality of your thought, that other souls verging toward the light, may be aided and encouraged; so that the number of pioneers would be thereby

increased in a geometrical ration, to effect this work of redemption for the Race."

"Now, in the second part of your question, you wish to know to what extent, awakened souls are protected from astral tenebraes?"

"To this question, I will answer, that the protecting influence thrown around evolving souls, is purely occult. The aroma of their lives and actions, reaching the higher planes, vibrates in unison with the higher spiritual forces, who in turn send counter vibrations of such a nature as to counteract any low vibrations of the earth plane. Thus are they protected by unseen Powers from the higher realms of Being. Milton says:

"So dear to heaven is saintly chastity  
That when a soul is found sincerely so  
A thousand liveried angels lackey her."

So fares it with the neopyte and all souls that have awakened into Life. The protecting arm of a law, that has its origin in the higher realms of Being, is constantly thrown around them. At times, the work which they perform, is condemned by the voice of the world and they are censured and blamed for their actions. But this is only in the seeming, for in the due course of time other events occur, which prove the absolute justice of their actions. So completely are they exonerated, that even the voice of the world is forced to admit the righteousness of their cause."

"Not only are the awakened souls protected from calumny and slander, but what is more wonderful still, they are protected from physical danger. There is no instance on record where a disciple of occultism has ever met death by violence. They always live to a ripe age and die a natural death. Nature is kind to the children of her heart. Living abstemiously and in compliance with the higher laws of Being, the body finally wears out and physical death follows as peacefully as a little child falling asleep."

"Then all this results from the fact, that the awakened soul has placed full confidence in the law?" asked the attentive Anthony.

"You have said it, my son," replied the seer. "When the soul reaches that stage of its evolution, it is bound to do this. It can follow no other course. It must trust the higher spiritual forces that are now directing its destiny. Hence the voice of the world is no longer heeded. The main springs of its life and activities, now lie in the unseen. It is here that it finds the concealed 'Fountains of Living Water,' that assuage its insatiable thirst for wisdom. Having overcome the emotions of the human heart,—that poor human heart that suffered so fearfully in the world of illusions—it has found the power of retiring within its own consciousness, and there finds the answer to every question—the solution to every riddle. The knowledge it gains on these higher levels, being absolute and not relative, makes this information certain. There can be no mistake. In these inner recesses of the consciousness, the soul has found its only and everlasting security. From the symbols and thought forms that are projected before its astral vision, to the opening glories of the Picture World, is the soul ushered into life. Functioning less and less in the physical, it hails with joy those precious hours when it retires within itself, to contemplate on the richness of its life and the mysteries of Being! What truths are made manifest to its inner faculties and what glories are revealed to its astral vision, only the saints and prophets know! Its ecstasies and transports in these super mental regions, are such processes that can be described and appreciated only by other illuminated souls, on similar levels of Spirit.

"Then there is a relationship in consciousness, and the tie that binds this relationship must be strong indeed?" interrupted Anthony.

**"My son," replied the seer, "the mystical tie that binds kindred souls in spiritual communion is of an occult nature, and is therefore not understood by the Children of the World who dwell in astral shadow. This subject is of such a nature and requires so much elaboration and detail to explain it clearly, that we will not take it up now, for the night grows late and we must retire. The subject, however, is of great interest and I will take great pleasure in explaining it to you fully on another evening."**



## CHAPTER XX.

### CONCLUSION.

**"My son," said Herminio, as they seated themselves within the inclosure on the following evening, "your soul has now reached that point in its evolution where it must rely on its inner promptings for its future guidance. For the time will soon come when I can give you no further personal instruction, for I will cease to function in physical form. In my case the Fates have been unusually kind, for I have lived a long life and played my part in the World of Form. The subject of our discourse tonight, was to be on the nature of that mystical tie that binds the members of the occult hierarchy in that mysterious unity of thought and action, linking them together in one body and making them One in mind and Spirit."**

**"At the outset I will declare," continued Herminio, "that this mystical tie is of an eternal nature, and does not change with the passing of Time. In this respect it is unlike the human ties of flesh and blood in the physical world. Now the tie that binds husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, are sacred though they are for the most part, of a physical nature only. This is as it should be. But on a little reflection, you will see that these ties are merely relative. For example, we may refer to a brother and sister; they are raised together from infancy, sharing everything in common. On attaining his majority, the brother leaves the home, the sister marries and they drift apart. Each one is playing**

his part in a world of changing forms. Though they meet in later years, the old influences have not the same power over them as in the days of childhood. Each one of them is striving for a different ideal, so that there is no unity in consciousness. Parent and child likewise undergo the same experience. The shifting scenes of the world of illusions, lead them into separate fields of activity. Parental and filial love becomes merely a memory and sometimes that memory is obliterated. Lastly, we will take the nearest and most sacred of all relationships—that of husband and wife. Here one would imagine, that in so close a relationship—in so sacred a union—of two in one flesh, the tie that binds would be of a more lasting nature. But what do we find? On the death of one of the parties, the survivor is free to contract another union, thus proving beyond all doubt that the union was purely physical, in which the higher consciousness played little, or no part."

"Thus we find that certain souls who reach the higher consciousness, segregate themselves and join certain religious Orders to escape contact with the world. In some of these communities, the family name and even the baptismal name is given up, so that thereby the appellation by which the member is known, does not call up any memory or tie of the past; for it is taken for granted that the bond which now unites it to the Universal Mind and the higher consciousness, is far above any human tie which it bore in the World of Illusions. Not only do the regulations of these orders tend to obliterate the memory of physical and family ties, but they go even further. At the death bed scene of a member of these Orders, the family is not admitted. Flesh and blood relationships are ignored. The passing soul is related only to God, the Author of its Being. Having lived a life of poverty, chastity and obedience, in compliance

with the vows that the Order demanded, its relationship to the Higher Powers, is the only relationship that the Order recognizes. I need not point out the salutary effect of such a course. The passing soul, wrapped in its visions and ecstasies, sees only God! Why should the relatives, who have all their lives functioned in a material world, who praised God with their lips, but never with their hearts, be present at such a spectacle? Is it not meet and just that this particular regulation of such Orders be given the highest praise? Does not such a course prove that the only true and lasting relationship, is that which exists between souls who have reached the Higher Consciousness? Hence it is that the relationship I bear to you, and that you bear to me, will endure forever throughout the countless aeons of the Future! Being founded in consciousness, it has nothing to do with the changing illusions of a purely Physical World. A little while ago I told you that my stay with you would be short. Two more years of earth life is all that remains for me. I know the exact day and hour of my dissolution. I do not fear death. I am to be delivered from a body in which my soul is imprisoned. After my passing you will require no personal instructions from anyone. There are souls in the flesh who function on still higher planes than I, but you will never meet them personally. It is not necessary. After my demise you will be instructed by these greater Souls through the Picture World. After that, other means still more wonderful will be at your command. Of this I will not speak, for it will follow and be made most clear to you by the aid of your super mental and astral faculties, which will be your certain guides in the future."

"As you have come to me to be taught the secrets of Creation and the mysteries of Life, so others

will come to you for advice and instruction. The inquirer becomes a pupil, the pupil a teacher and the teacher an adept. Thus there are ascending grades of consciousness, from the worm that crawls on the slimy earth to the glorious Archangel who stands on the shining parapets of Heaven!"

"Anthony Colombo, you have reached a stage in your evolution to which ordinary men have not attained. To your Higher Vision there has been revealed such glories and beauties of Creation, as becomes the reward of the seer and prophet. You are now related to that Hierarchy of Beings, who not only command the forces of the visible universe, but set in motion by their mighty thought, such vibrations on the Higher Planes of Being, that coming within the sphere of your astral vision, you are constantly reminded of the relationship they bear to you, and that you bear to them.

"Thus are you kept in constant touch with those mighty Intelligences that guard the humanity of this Planet, and lead it on to its glorious destiny. From this time forward your work is to help struggling souls who are coming into Life, to send them helpful thoughts and encouragement. For the next two years must you occupy yourself in this way. At the end of that time my death will occur. You will be alone in this heritage for a period of years. But you will never be lonely. It matters not to you where you live, for you will function so much in astral body, that the whole world becomes your home while this rude dwelling only shelters your physical form. Having overcome the emotions of the human heart, you have risen above the plane of sorrow and suffering and your only desire and your only joy is to so aid humanity to rise from its sorrows and heartaches, that are caused by its imprisonment in a World of Illusions. To this end must you bend every faculty of Will, and every thought of your Being. Have

no fear of the Future, for there is nothing to fear. In the latter years of your life you will have many pupils. All that I have explained to you, you will explain to them, for as your inner faculties develop greater beauties and mysteries will be revealed, and glory after glory will be unveiled."

As the seer spoke these last words, he turned his gaze upward and bade Anthony do the same. At some distance above them a marvelous picture began to form in the darkness. It was illuminated by a golden colored light, which also formed the background. In the center appeared a little child standing upright with outstretched hands and palms uplifted. Then a female form advanced toward the child and laid upon its palms, a laurel wreath; all the while beaming upon it with benignity and compassion. Above the two figures a dove hovered, poised and motionless with outspread wings, while two shafts of white light streamed from its pinions and rested gently on the head of the child and the woman.

"The child, said Herminio, represents the awakened soul, standing before Wisdom represented by the female figure. She gives the soul a laurel wreath emblematical of victory over its lower nature. The dove signifies peace and love with which the awakened soul will be in its future surrounded. Let us raise our hands in adoration."

At this admonition Anthony raised his hands, as did the seer. With streaming eyes he beheld the picture move from right to left across the field of vision. In the silence of the night it disappeared from view and the seer and his pupil were left with outstretched hands, enveloped in the darkness.

\* \* \* \* \*

Anthony Colombo has reached that height in his soul's evolution, to which all humanity must in the

far away future inevitably tend. As a pioneer in the Realm of the Unknown, it becomes his bounden duty to instruct all illuminated souls on the perilous way through the tenebrous regions that lead them finally from the Plane of Illusions into Reality; introducing them by almost imperceptible degrees into the beautiful phenomena of the Astral and the Picture World, bringing down upon them, wisdom and illumination, resulting ultimately in seership.

\* \* \* \* \*

Patient Reader, you are a part of that great Life that animates the Universe of Spirit. The problem that confronted Anthony Colombo, the Sicilian scholar, will confront you in time. It is an event foreknown. It is written in the Chart of your Destiny. You cannot escape. For the day will come and the hour will strike when your Personality will suffer crucifixion on the Cross of Matter. It is the Universal Fate. There is no exception. Through the emotions and the intellect you will suffer tortures that no human tongue can describe. But be stout of heart, for the ordeal must be endured. It is the purpose of Nature. The death throes of the Personality are the birth pangs of the Spirit. With the extinction of the Personality, you will sever your connection with the Physical World. Its deceits and sham pleasures will no longer attract you, for you will have learned that its greatest honors and its highest awards are attended with vanity and vexation of spirit. And that even its joys are unreal, for they belong and appertain to that World of Form, which your illuminated understanding will regard as the merest of illusions.

Thus freed from the Pairs of Opposites—liberated from the sway of the emotions—you will enter higher realms of Being and be made aware of your relationship to those mighty Intelligences, that are

in turn united in consciousness to still greater Hierarchies and Orders, whose number is infinite. By occult processes they will guide your future Destiny. You will be given power to interpret the beautiful symbol and color language of the astral plane. Through the marvelous phenomena of the Picture World, you will be given the gift of Prophecy. You will experience the ecstasies of the Saint and Psalmist, and be able to forecast the coming of events, as were the Seers and Prophets of Isaiah!

What a future is thine, Oh Man! Can the Soul in the present Age, enveloped as it is in astral tenebrae, appreciate so grand a conception? Can it be brought to realize that the mighty Cosmos with its whirling suns and worlds, its nebulae and star streams, belong to the lowest order of Nature—the Physical Plane—that to the higher consciousness, the Universe is as nothing—a phantasm; for it fades from the consciousness of the newly awakened soul, as mist before the sun, in comparison with the supernal glories that are to be unveiled!

From the discords of physical Life you will have reached to the Harmonies of Creation. In the inner shrine of your heart—the hidden sanctuary—you will receive vibrations from a formless world! You will attain to heights far past the poet's dream, for you will have become one with the Seer. But being a part of the Great Life, you cannot forget humanity. Each struggling soul, bruised and wounded by the world, that comes to you for advice and guidance, is always worthy of knowledge. Your duty will be to help them. This will be your life work. It is a duty imposed on you by the very Powers you will have evoked by your call for knowledge. Do not waver from this responsibility. You cannot evade it. You will be given great powers, but you can not remain a sealed vessel—you must be an open channel—

admitting the light of knowledge within your heart, you are bound in conscience to open the doors of its hidden chambers and let it stream forth in all its effulgence and splendor upon the humblest soul that comes to you in the critical time of its awakening. Then it is that you become the mysterious physician with the balm of Gilead, healing the Soul of the wounds it received in the world.

And the more you give, the more you will receive. What a wonder is here! Not swayed by joy or sorrow; not affected by that eternal Pair of Opposites which formed the background of your life, when you functioned only in a physical world, the motives that will impel you to action will come from a Formless Plane. By invisible forces you will be protected from all danger even in the physical world. For you now belong to that greater Hierarchy of Beings who are the real children of Nature. You will be a child of her heart. Having made the Unity with the Self—with the Universal Mind—you will have reached to that Plane of Consciousness toward which aspiring souls in all ages, have ever strived to gain. There, in a state of bliss, a never ending bliss, beyond all human thought, you will rest secure in a perpetual state of Everlasting Love and Peace.

T H E E N D.